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[THE RIVALS.]

THE GOLDEN HOPE.

By Mrs. H. Lewis.

CHAPTER XV.

I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this!

Hamlet.

THE momentary shadow that had obscured the faces and hearts of the young lovers at the sound of that anguished sigh and the memories it evoked passed as swiftly as it had come before the sunshine of their love. Sir Richard Haughton bent again over the maiden, his breath caressing her rippling waves of perfumed hair, and his honest blue eyes beaming with a mighty and unutterable love such as had never before possessed his soul. And Hellice, shy and modest, with drooping head and scarlet cheek, half nestled beside him, wondering at the great flood of happiness that had so suddenly illumined her lonely life, transforming it into an Elysium.

"I never dreamed of joy like this," said the young baronet. "This moment more than recompenses me for all my past lonely, sorrowful years. Sea View will become a Paradise when you walk within its walls, Hellice. I had thought that woman's voice and woman's laughter would never be heard there again, but your presence will yet, I trust, make the sweetest sunshine and music in my home."

He spoke ardently, and with enthusiasm. Whatever he felt, he felt strongly. He possessed one of those strong, domestic natures peculiar to those of English race; but home to him could not be home unless it enshrined a dear and loving presence. His life had been so long desolated by the treachery of his divorced wife that he could hardly comprehend his present joy, and he welcomed it as the storm-tossed and shipwrecked wanderer welcomes the clear-shining beacon that points out a safe and peaceful harbour. So Sir Richard, with no prophetic voice

warning him of the future, fancied he had reached a secure haven at last.

"You speak as though you had never loved before, Richard," said Hellice, shyly, half frightened at the sound of her own sweet voice freighted with feeling. "Am I your first love?"

The young baronet was struck with dismay at this question. A temptation seized him to confide the story of his life to Hellice, to lay bare before her the history of his early infatuation for Margaret Sorel, his marriage with her, and their early subsequent divorce. He knew now that he had never loved the handsome actress, that his fancy for her had been but fleeting, and even had she been worthy of his affection, his life could not have been otherwise than barren and desolate with her. He knew that Hellice, as his betrothed wife, had a right to his confidence, and yet he shrank from telling her. How could he pour into her pure ears the tale of Margaret Sorel's baseness and wickedness? How could he shock her with a recital of such unwomanliness as must puzzle her innocent soul to comprehend? He decided that he could not tell her now, but when she had become his wife, and no possible shadow could arise between them, he would confide to her the story of his early marriage. He had no fears that gossiping visitors would reveal it, for his affairs had been kept tolerably secret, the tragic events of his life having transpired at a considerable distance from his home. Lady Redwoode was familiar with his history, but he had no doubts of her discretion or of that of the various members of her family.

He unwisely resolved therefore to defer his confidence for the present. Had some kind providence but even slightly lifted the veil of the future, he would have hastened to lay bare his life before his betrothed, and rested not until she had become familiar with its details. But not even a prophetic sadness warned him when he made his decision.

Gathering the maiden closer to him, and speaking with a truthful solemnity, made more effective by the slight pause that had preceded it, he said:

"You are my first, last, and only love. Before I knew you I never even imagined what it was to

love. You are the first to arouse the deeper and holier emotions of my nature, and when I cease to adore you my soul will have ceased to exist."

A bright, glad smile lighted up the face of Hellice, and at the same moment that long-drawn, sobbing sigh was heard again throughout the room. Then followed a sound like the rustling of a robe against the leaves of low-lying plants and shrubs; then a shadow flitted across the open doorway, and the perfume-laden breeze cast back to their ears a low, anguished cry that seemed wrung from the human heart in despair.

The lovers looked up quickly, but their glances assured them that they were alone.

"There must have been someone in here," said Hellice, wondering.

Sir Richard's heart echoed her words, and foreboded the name of the unhappy listener. Could Margaret Sorel have gained access to the conservatory from the garden, and had she heard the avowal of his love for Hellice? Tortured by the thought, he sprang up, traversed the length of the room quickly, and looked out at the open door. There was no trace of the hidden listener without, but Mr. Haughton was coming up the garden, fanning himself with his hat, and pausing now and then to look behind him with an exceedingly puzzled stare.

The young baronet turned to retrace his steps to Hellice. He had made but two or three paces towards her, when his troubled gaze fell upon a bit of cambric gleaming like snow under the shade of a heavy-blossomed oleander-tree. He sprang towards it and picked it up, shaking from it as he did so a sickly perfume which he recognized as the favourite odour of Margaret Sorel. It was not necessary that he should catch sight of the daintily embroidered initials in the corner to assure himself that the handkerchief belonged to her. He flung it from him as though it had been a deadly serpent, and with ill-concealed agitation approached Hellice.

"It is nothing, my darling," he said, tenderly, bending his face over the clustering orange-blossoms that continued to drift their vagrant petals upon the maiden's head, that she might not notice the deadly



paleness that he felt creeping over his features. "I saw no one but my uncle in the garden."

He appeared to be inhaling the exquisite fragrances of the flowers, and Hellice, absorbed in sweet reveries, did not notice his anxious manner. He felt certain that his divorced wife had been present throughout his interview with Hellice, and that she would prove herself a bitter enemy to him and his betrothed. With a sudden feeling of danger, he resolved no longer to delay the communication of his early marriage.

"Hellice," he began suddenly, and then paused, with a sinking heart, for his uncle had appeared at the threshold of the conservatory and was about to enter their presence.

His opportunity had passed for the present, and he recognized the fact with a troubled foreboding.

The young girl looked up at the sound of her name, and at the same moment Mr. Haughton approached the young couple, his countenance wearing a look of abstraction and his eyes beaming with benevolent interest upon them.

"Good morning, Miss Glintwick," he said, with a very deep bow and a courteous wave of the hand. "I hope I see you well. I find you in your rightful home among the flowers, and not less fair than they. The bright exotic of India seems to flourish on English soil."

Hellice blushed rosily, and murmured her thanks for the compliment.

"A compliment was never better deserved, as Sir Richard can bear witness," replied Mr. Haughton, looking from one to the other of the young pair. "You look different from usual, Dick. What can be the matter? Have you young people quarrelled?"

"Not so, uncle," said the young baronet, stealing an arm around the slender, upright figure of Hellice. "You must forgive me for forestalling you," and he smiled, "but I have asked Miss Glintwick to become my wife, and she has kindly consented to have pity upon me."

Mr. Haughton appeared astonished and even overcame at this revelation. He caught hold of a small geranium for support, but his grasp was so vigorous as to uproot it. He then leaned against an orange-tree, bending it under his weight, and turned a glance full of sorrow and reproach upon his recreant nephew.

"Richard," he exclaimed, in tones of grief, "you knew I intended to marry Hellice myself."

"But she preferred me, uncle."

"Is that so? Then it alters the case," said Mr. Haughton, resignedly. "Perhaps it is better so. I must remain wedded to science. Posterity would have a right to reproach me if I deserted the cause of science even for love. Hellice will live at Sea View and I shall see her every day just the same. My blessings on your choice, Richard"—and his manner became grandiloquent and paternal. "Hellice, I trust you will be as happy as you deserve."

He offered his hand, and imprinted a kiss upon Hellice's cheek as a token of his perfect resignation in her choice. Thoughts of his flying-machine, which for a week had been quite forgotten, came to console him for his disappointment, and he became almost cheerful in view of his anticipated mechanical triumphs.

"Be happy, both of you," he enjoined them, with a display of paternal affection. "Let no pity for me mar your happiness. And, speaking of happiness, it reminds me of that gipsy we met one day last week. I saw her steal out of this conservatory a few minutes ago, and make for the wood. I hope she had no more of her pleasant little prophecies for you. Did she say you would marry and be happy, and that I would attain to a towering position in the world of fame?"

"The—the gipsy was here, then?" exclaimed the baronet.

"Do you doubt your senses, Richard?" inquired his surprised relative.

"We did not see her, Mr. Haughton," said Hellice, unpleasantly impressed by the fact of the pretended gipsy's recent proximity.

Mr. Haughton expressed his astonishment at this assertion, and soon after, hearing voices in the drawing-room, proceeded thither. Sir Richard lingered behind him only long enough to solicit permission of his betrothed to confide their engagement to Lady Redwoode, and then sought her at once—leaving Hellice alone, as the maiden desired.

She did not linger in the conservatory, where the flowers and fountains had been made witnesses of her sweet embarrassments and of her lover's tender caresses. She feared that Lady Redwoode would seek her there, and she did not wish to meet even the baroness then. Acting upon a sudden impulse, she glided out into the garden and sought the shade of the wood, that she might undisturbedly commune with her heart.

The day was one of those sweet summer days when the bare sense of existence becomes a luxury. The sunshine was warm and genial; the soft zephyrs were scarcely astir; and the air was full of fresh, delightful odours, that escaped from the garden flowers, and even from the brown, teeming earth. The tamed deer roved through the wood, and even approached near to the dwelling; hares scudded across the paths more in frolic than in fear; and the birds held high jubilee upon their airy perches and in their leafy refuges. It seemed to Hellice as though nature sympathized in her happiness, and every mute creature and inanimate thing rejoiced with her.

She took her way towards the waterfall, beside which she had first seen Sir Richard, walking with a bounding step and a light heart. Her face was sunshine incarnate, and her dark-gray eyes were full of a shy, sweet light that was inexpressibly beautiful. She had proceeded nearly the whole distance, when a sudden groaning sound near at hand made her stop and look around her.

The sound proceeded from a little leafy dell a little way from the path, and Hellice, more than ever alive to sorrow, moved towards the spot. She was unprepared for the sight that met her gaze. The pretended gipsy, who had warned her the previous week, lay prone upon the ground, grovelling like a wounded animal and groaning as if in mortal pain. Hellice's heart was touched at once. She came nearer, and inquired, softly:

"Are you ill, gipsy? Can I—"

Softly as the words were uttered, and absorbed as was the woman in her anguish, she heard them, and looked up with an abrupt fierceness that almost startled the maiden.

"You here to mock me!" she ejaculated, struggling to a half-upright posture.

Hellice retreated a step, remembering her early fears that the gipsy had lost control of her mental faculties, but she answered, bravely and gently:

"Not to mock you, but to care for you, if you are ill! I was on my way to the cascade when I heard you groaning. Can I do anything for you?"

"If you had only heeded my warning!" cried the woman, in a childlike voice, putting her hand over her eyes to shut out the bright and glowing vision of the youthful Hellice. "He loves you as he never loved before! I heard him say so—was it not so?" and she struck at her breast fiercely.

Hellice's suspicions began to grow stronger, and she looked pityingly at the woman she believed to be a lunatic. She was tempted to call a gardener to look after the gipsy, but there was no one near, and some impulse impelled her to remain with her. With a look of quiet resoluteness that impressed even the unhappy Margaret Sorel, she said:

"Get up and tell me what troubles you. If you want comfort or assistance, perhaps I can aid you!"

The pretended gipsy struggled to her feet and turned her face towards Hellice. The maiden started at the ravages a week had made in that bold gipsy-like beauty. The once red cheeks were thin and haggard; the black eyes gleamed from cavernous sockets with a lurid sort of light that was unpleasant to see; the forehead showed two or three deeply cut wrinkles; and the black hair that streamed from beneath the red hood looked uncombed and uncared for. All the softness and youth seemed pressed out of the wild, pale face. The woman looked as though her nature had suffered from a volcano-like shock, whose lava tide had swept over her soul, burying under its crushing wave all that was good, true and tender in her.

She smiled bitterly at Hellice's startled look, and exclaimed:

"Yes, I have changed since first we met, lady; and so have you. The brighter bloom in your cheeks has fed on mine; the happiness which possesses your heart has consumed mine. You think me insane. I wish I were," and she uttered a wild, discordant laugh that made Hellice shudder. "But I am not, and I shall use my reason to wreck other hearts as mine is wrecked!"

Hellice knew not what to reply, and while she hesitated Margaret Sorel continued, with an hysterical sob:

"I was in the conservatory and heard all he said to you. You blushed and smiled like a child, and he worshipped you as he never worshipped me. I heard what he said about never having loved before, but it's false—false! He loved me for years, and he would love me now, had not your baby face come between us!"

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Hellice, willing to humour the supposed fancies of the woman.

"Of Sir Richard Haughton!" declared the pretended gipsy, endeavouring to speak calmly.

"What is Sir Richard Haughton to you?" inquired the baronet's betrothed.

"What is he to me?" half shrieked the divorced wife. "He is my life, my strength, my love! He is more to me than anyone else in the wide world! He is what he can never be to you—my husband!"

"Your husband!" repeated Hellice, growing pale. "This is a strange fancy—"

"It is not a fancy, Miss Glintwick," declared Margaret Sorel, forcing her passions under control, and looking steadily at the maiden. "I am not deceiving you any more than I am deceiving myself. I am Sir Richard Haughton's wife, and I can prove myself such!"

Hellice did not believe the assertion, but she felt her heart grow faint within her. The woman spoke with such impressive earnestness, and, wild as she seemed, she did not yet act as Hellice imagined an insane person would do. Still, the maiden assured herself, she must be a monomaniac. Perhaps she had seen the young baronet often, and had fallen in love with him, forgetting the difference in rank and the social bar between them.

"I will tell you my story, Miss Glintwick," said the pretended gipsy, speaking in a suppressed tone, as if she could with difficulty keep the rein upon her passions. "I am not a gipsy, as my dress declares me to be. I am the daughter of a poor gentleman, who educated his children with difficulty, and who then died, leaving them to make their way through the world as best they could. My brothers were thriftless fellows, who hated work and were unable to support me. I discovered that I possessed histrionic talent, and became an actress. I was successful, and was soon able to support my brothers as well as myself in luxury. I was courted and dattered, as every successful actress is; but I never loved until I met Sir Richard Haughton. He was Mr. Haughton then—a boy of twenty—and I was older than he. He was charmed with my talent, delighted with my beauty—in short, he fell in love with me!"

She paused to note the effect of these words upon Hellice. The maiden stood, pale and quiet, with a look of serene confidence in her eyes, yet with an anxious smile on her lips. Her confidence in her lover remained unshaken, yet a vague sense of coming trouble began to make itself felt at her heart. She was convinced by the woman's language that she was no gipsy, and this discovery added to her disquietude.

Dissatisfied that she had not yet weakened the girl's faith in Sir Richard, the divorced wife resumed:

"The wooing of Richard Haughton was so different from that of others that I could not do otherwise than yield to it. He offered me an honourable love; he addressed me as his equal in rank; he was so ardent, so impulsive, so unremitting in his attentions that I grew to love him better than life. He urged me to marry him, and I consented. I knew his father would never consent to our marriage, so I urged that it should be a secret one. He agreed to my suggestion, and we were married secretly, but in church, and in the presence of a sufficient number of witnesses."

Still, Hellice showed no agitation, no token of implicit belief in her words, and Margaret Sorel anatomized the perfect trust with which the maiden regarded her betrothed. She saw that absolute proofs would be necessary before Hellice would credit her statements, and she hated the girl in her heart.

"We were married," she said, and her tone was almost a wail with the bitter memories arising in her soul. "We went to my lodgings, to partake of our wedding-breakfast and to secure our luggage, intending to set out immediately for Sea View. Richard left the room in which I was, for some reason or another, to call a cab or post a letter, and he returned sooner than I expected. Stopping at the door of my room a moment, he overheard my conversation with my brother. He heard enough to induce him to believe that I had married him for rank and wealth only, and he burst in upon us, upbraided me, and then left me for ever. He came to Sea View, inherited the title and property, and during all these years has led a hermit-like existence. We have never met until lately. He loved me, Miss Glintwick, as he will never love again, as he does not, and cannot, love you. I believe he loves me yet, and that he would sue for my love again if it were not for you!"

This partially true but garbled statement, delivered with an earnestness that resembled truth, could not altogether fail of effect. Hellice began to believe that the actress really loved Sir Richard, but she placed no credence in the assertion concerning the marriage.

"Your story cannot be quite true," she said, simply. "Sir Richard would not have asked me to become his wife if he were wedded to another."

Margaret Sorel's brow darkened.

"Shall I prove my words?" she asked, quickly. "Would you believe me if you were to see in marriage certificate? Perhaps you are familiar with Sir Richard's handwriting. Look here!"

She drew from her bosom a small packet of documents tied carefully with ribbon. Unloosing the packet, she took from the rest a paper which she handed to Hellice in silence. It proved to be a certificate of marriage between Margaret Sorel, spinster, and Richard Haughton, bachelor—signed and witnessed in accordance with the forms prescribed by law. It was old and worn and seemed to have been carried for years.

Hellice's brain reeled as she read it, and the hands with which she returned it trembled as with ague.

"Read these," said Margaret Sorel, giving her the letters.

Hellice took them and perused them. She was already familiar with Sir Richard's rather peculiar handwriting, he having contributed to Cecile's album, and given her a written copy of an old ballad Hellice had desired. She recognized the penmanship at once, and many of the expressions in the letters were familiar to her. In perfect sympathy with her lover, familiar already with his modes of thought, and his manner of expression, she could not fail to recognize his hand in these epistles. They were crude, boyish letters, impulsive and loving. Some pleaded for a marriage, and in one the writer spoke of having made every final arrangement for the union, and looked for the morrow that would make Margaret his wife.

They were in truth Sir Richard's letters, and as Hellice read them the conviction of their authorship forced itself upon her.

"This was his earliest gift to me," said the divorced wife, drawing forth a pretty jewelled locket enclosing Sir Richard's portrait. "Look at it."

Hellice took it and looked long and earnestly at the fair, boyish face portrayed there. The honest blue eyes, the smiling mouth, the frank, open countenance, all were recognized at once, although Sir Richard now was a calm, grave, dignified man, rarely given to smiles, and more haughty and reserved than frank and open. Comparing the picture before her with that engraven on her heart, Hellice felt that her lover must have once looked like the smiling portrait, and that some great sorrow had made him the man he now was.

She gave back the locket wearily, and Margaret Sorel then took from her finger a slender golden circlet.

"That was my wedding-ring," she said. "Look at the inscription within!"

Hellice obeyed, reading the words: "Richard to Margaret," and after them a date which she repeated as if wishing to remember it.

"Have I given you proofs enough?" demanded the divorced wife, marvelling at the girl's calmness. "Quite enough," was the low response. "And you are his wife now?"

"Certainly," declared Margaret Sorel, unblushingly. "That is a strange question to ask."

"I know it, but I thought it so strange that Sir Richard should ask me to be his wife if he had one already. He knew you the other day, I suppose. I can hardly believe all this. My brain seems on fire."

She looked up at her enemy with a perplexed expression in her dusky eyes, and her face was white as snow, except in the cheeks, where a feverish red burned, glowed, and flickered like the wavering flame of a lamp. She put back her heavy hair from her forehead in a bewildered sort of way, and said, pitifully:

"I thought he loved me. I thought he had a right to love me. How could he say such things if he had no right to do so?"

Margaret Sorel was not at all bad. She had hated Hellice for the joy and pride of her triumphant love, hated her for her brilliant beauty and youthfulness; but now, when she met the gaze of those sweet blue eyes she turned away her head in sorrow. She was not generous enough to declare that the law had given Sir Richard back his freedom; she was not generous enough to yield him to this younger, lovelier rival, but she did at that moment grieve that Hellice should have been the one chosen by him, and consequently been placed in the way of her revenge.

"It is hard at first," she thought, "but she will get over it by and by. She is only a child now, and I will not give up my life to gratify a childish love. No, no! He is mine, and I will claim him!"

Yet she spoke kindly and sympathetically to Hellice, striving to soothe her strange, tearless grief. Her words fell upon unheeding ears. The maiden looked at her as if trying to understand, and then shook her head sadly, murmuring:

"I thought him so good and noble! He is so, I am sure; and but for this temptation he would never

have done wrong. He loves me now, but if you can win him back you are free to do so."

"You will not take him from me then?" cried the divorced wife, eagerly.

Hellice looked surprised at the question.

"He can be nothing more to me, not even a friend," she said, with strange calmness. "Our engagement was but a mockery. I cannot meet him again. I had intended to go away from Redwoode. I see now that I must go. You have nothing more to say to me?"

Margaret Sorel replied in the negative, wondering anew at the quietude of Hellice, her singular calmness, and deciding in her own mind that the girl's love had been but weak after all.

"Then I will not stay here longer," said Hellice. "You need grieve no longer on my account, poor Margaret. Sir Richard is free so far as I am concerned."

She bowed, and walked away with that wild grace that distinguished her, and the divorced wife, looking after her, muttered:

"She is only a child, and I am glad the blow has not fallen heavily upon her. My love is my life, my soul, but she can give Richard up without a tear. It is to me he belongs, and if he will not have me he shall have no wife at all!"

With a bitter smile she stalked away in the direction of the kitchen.

If she could have followed Hellice to the dwelling, to her secluded tower-chamber, and seen her fall prostrate upon the floor, giving way to such a tempest of grief as seldom tortures any except the young, she would have said that Hellice's love was not a weak and childish passion, but that it was the love of a lifetime. The young girl abandoned herself to her grief. She had known sorrows before, but not sorrow like this. Her lonely heart had responded to Sir Richard, and to believe him false or treacherous was an anguish too great for endurance. We will not dwell on the maiden's grief. Her joy in his love had been rapture; her sorrow was correspondingly extreme. Baiting with her misery, she did not know that more than once someone knocked at her door for admittance and went away uncertain if she were in her room, nor did she even guess how Sir Richard lingered in the drawing-room, anxious to communicate the fact of Lady Redwoode's approval of their engagement, and longing to feast his eyes upon the beauty of his betrothed, and to comfort his heart by the renewed assurance of her love. But Hellice appeared not, and Sir Richard, troubled and anxious at her strange disappearance, took his leave, promising himself that he would return in the evening and confide to her his early history.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of what seems
A trifle, a mere nothing, by itself,
In some nice situation turns the scale
Of fate, and rules the most important actions.

Tucred.

SIR RICHARD HAUGHTON paid his promised visit to Redwoode that evening, but he did not obtain sight of his betrothed. In reply to his anxious inquiries, he learned only that Hellice was indisposed and could not see even him. He remained an hour or more, hoping to receive some message from Hellice, but he waited in vain. The maiden betrayed no consciousness of his presence, or anxiety about him. Cecile's gaiety seemed heartless to him; Andrew Forsythe's gloom annoyed him; and he found consolation only in the unusual silence and abstraction of the baroness. When at length he returned home he carried with him a gloomy heart and awakening suspicions that Hellice's illness was in some way due to the enmity of his divorced wife. He called the next day, and the next, but Hellice remained inaccessible to him. He wrote her a long, confidential letter, in which he told the story of his marriage and divorce, but the letter was returned unopened, with the message that Miss Glintwick was unable to read it. Tortured and harassed beyond description, he sought everywhere for the pretended gipsy whose hand had wrought him so much evil, but Margaret Sorel had taken refuge in the little inn at Wharton, and he was unable to trace her. Nothing remained for him, therefore, but to wait as patiently as he could until an interview with his betrothed should be vouchsafed him.

Meanwhile Hellice, consumed with a low, nervous fever, remained in her own rooms, refusing to see even her supposed grandmother until her waning strength had rendered her opposition too feeble to be regarded. The fever that fed upon her delicately organized physical system had its central fire in her heart. She did not once lose possession of her senses. She did not grow impatient under her sorrows, as might have been expected of one of her proud temperament. On the contrary, she bore herself with

a sort of humility which was not meekness, and with a quiet sadness that was more touching than any violent outbreak of passion. No one, not even the keen-eyed Renee, suspected the cause of her illness. It was said in the household, and repeated to Sir Richard Haughton, that the indisposition was consequent upon her change of climate, and scarcely anyone doubted the statement.

At first, she lay upon a couch drawn up before one of the long French windows of her sitting-room, from which position she could command a view of the approach to the mansion; but after she had once beheld the coming of her lover and had seen him look up eagerly as if yearning to catch sight of her, she had moved her couch to another window. But she could not so easily remove from her mind the impression made by the baronet's pale and anxious face. She condemned herself for loving him still, while she knew that the love she cherished would perish only with her life.

It must not be supposed that she was neglected and uncared for. As she became weaker and less tenacious in her desire for utter solitude, Renee made a great show of attention and affection. She was always in her rooms when likely to be seen there. She shed many tears before people, and loudly lamented the illness of her grandchild, and but little less loudly extolled her virtues. The physician who came to Redwoode daily, and who was puzzled by Hellice's symptoms, declared that the Hindoo was remarkable for her love for her grand-daughter, and that she was his most efficient coadjutor. Cecile came to the tower-chamber regularly every morning with kindly greetings and good wishes, but Hellice knew how hollow was the heart of her cousin and how insincere her wishes, and she turned from her in silent loathing. Andrew Forsythe sent every day fresh flowers from the conservatory, but the fragrance of the orange-blossoms brought back to Hellice the memory of the hour when she had listened to Sir Richard's confession of love and that sweet odour had floated around them like a part of the sweet story. She sent them away untouched. Mr. Kenneth inquired particularly about her health, and his round, rosy face perceptibly lengthened each time when the answer was returned that Miss Glintwick was no better. Poor Mr. Haughton hovered about Redwoode like an uneasy ghost, forgetful of his mechanical contrivances, and solicitous only for the maiden whom he loved as a father might have loved.

But Lady Redwoode was troubled more than any other excepting Sir Richard Haughton. She missed the dark, delicate face of Hellice at the table. She missed the music of her voice, her proud, graceful ways, the smothered tenderness that had been perceptible to her in the girl's dusky eyes, and the winning loveliness of her manner. She visited her daily, but the constraint of Renee's presence prevented a better understanding between her and the invalid. She began to tire of Cecile's never-ceasing compliments and flattery. She began to feel dimly that Cecile was false and dissimulating, and that the girl she had rejected was true, good and pure to the depths of her being. She did not dare to acknowledge these thoughts to herself lest she should be wronging Cecile, but day after day and night after night the fear came to her that she had been mistaken in her choice and that she might have taken to her heart her brother's child and cast off her own. She grew thin, pale and anxious under this constant conflict, but not even to Andrew Forsythe or Mr. Kenneth did she breathe a word of her doubts.

Hellice had been ill a week, and the fever had lessened in her veins. Her strength had begun to return, but almost imperceptibly, and she had schooled herself to face her destiny with the quiet resolute-ness that formed one of her chief characteristics. In the lonely night hours she had decided upon her future course, and she was resolved to adhere to it without swerving. She was not one to weakly pine over a disappointment, so she gathered around her her mantle of pride, and was resolved to wear a smooth brow even though the terrible vulture of despair tore fiercely at her heart and threatened to loosen the chord that bound her to life.

She was lying on her couch, basking in the rays of the declining sun, which streamed through her western window, throwing a flood of radiance upon her face and figure. Her head was nestled upon a wide, lace-frilled pillow, over which her long, heavy, unbound hair rippled in shining waves. Her shawl was gathered over her shoulders, and its bright hue was reflected in her clear cheeks. She was looking dreamily and thoughtfully down into the wood that crept up almost to the tower itself, but her thoughts were far away from the scene and her surroundings.

At a little distance from her, upon a low ottoman, was seated Renee, her fingers lazily weaving a sort of bead-work, and her brown face wearing a stolid expression, not changed even when she now and then looked up furtively at her young charge.

"Will you have your medicine now, Hellice?" asked the Hindoo, breaking in upon the maiden's reverie.

"I want no medicines, Renee," returned the girl, without starting or changing her attitude. "Medicines cannot reach my disease. My wound is here!" and she placed her hand upon her heart.

Renee looked puzzled, and was on the point of demanding an explanation, when a knock was heard at the door, and Lady Redwoode entered the room. She came directly to the side of the couch, bent over Hellice, and took the thin hand in her own.

"The doctor says you are on the road to recovery, Hellice," she said, cheerfully, taking a seat, and retaining possession of the invalid's hand. "You are looking better, I think."

Hellice smiled faintly and looked up with something of adoration into the lovely face drooping over her.

"Do you think you could see Sir Richard to-day?" whispered the baroness, kindly. "You do not know how he has suffered during your illness. He is downstairs now and has pleaded for only a minute's interview with you!"

Hellice's face grew even paler and her eyes shone with a greater light, but her voice was very low as she answered:

"I cannot see him. I am too weak to undergo the excitement!"

"His visit should calm instead of exciting you, my dear. But if you will not see him you must let me take him some kind message. Do not trouble yourself to think of one. Leave it to me, and I will promise that your delicacy shall not be compromised!"

"But, Lady Redwoode—"

"No remonstrances, Hellice!" interrupted the baroness, smiling. "I am aware of your engagement to marry Sir Richard, and you have my cordial approval. I know he loves you ardently and will make you happy. I trust," she added, "that his second marriage will be happier than the first—"

"The first!" echoed Hellice.

"Yes. Of course, Sir Richard told you that he had been married, and that his wife had died some three or four years ago. At least, such was the report. It was a strange story, but no doubt you have heard it all!"

"Yes, I have heard it all!" said Hellice, with a look of pain, closing her eyes that their anguished expression might not alarm her relative.

"The doctor told me that I must cheer you by pleasant conversation, and that talking would not hurt you," remarked the baroness. "May I send Renee away a little while?"

Hellice nodded assent, and Lady Redwoode dismissed the Hindoo, who retired with a scowling brow to the adjoining chamber, where she applied herself to the task of eaves-dropping, determined that not a word uttered during the interview should escape her knowledge.

When they were left alone the baroness drew still nearer to Hellice, and looked down upon her agitated face.

"My child," she said, in a half-stifled voice, and with a tender, reassuring glance, "I have been greatly troubled during your illness. I have been led to believe that you were artful, false, and wicked, but I doubt these assertions now."

"I knew you thought so," said Hellice, quietly.

"But you made no attempt whatever to undeceive me."

Hellice hesitated, and her cheek flushed as she answered:

"How could I deny such an assertion? And if I could have stooped to clear my character from such aspersions, I must have sought to prejudice you against your own child."

"You believe Cecile to be my child, then?" asked the baroness, abruptly.

There was a brief pause, and then the invalid said, in a clear, low tone, thrilling with pain:

"Yes, Aunt Agatha, I believe Cecile to be your child. Your instinct pointed her out to you. Nature has given her your features, and though there are proofs that she is only your niece they can be readily explained."

"What are the proofs, Hellice?"

"Pardon me, Aunt Agatha," replied the young girl, "but I cannot answer you. My words cannot have weight with you. You have been told that I am false and deceitful, and you know nothing to the contrary. My assertions then would not be believed, and if they were they would only render you anxious and uneasy. I would not withhold the proofs of which I spoke if any other than I were Cecile's rival claimant to your love, but you must permit me to be silent."

"I cannot!" exclaimed Lady Redwoode, with a cry of pain. "I believe you to be truthful, Hellice, honest, and good. Cecile has never understood

you rightly. But the proofs, Hellice—I must have them!"

The maiden was tempted to adhere to her refusal, but the imploring look of the baroness decided her to be frank, and she said:

"From our earliest childhood Cecile was the favourite of my parents, and I was always taught to defer to her in all things. Renee loved her best, and papa almost adored her. Everything beautiful was lavished upon her. Papa's means were limited and he could not afford to give us liberal allowances of money for our own use, but that of Cecile's was always double that given me. During mamma's lifetime I never received from her any of the caresses bestowed liberally upon my foster-sister. A thousand trifles, merely trifles to you, madam, but heavy griefs to me at the time of their occurrence, made me feel like a stranger in my own home. I suppose now," she added, "that what I then thought love for Cecile may have been the promptings of remorse. I do not envy my cousin. I would not rob her of your love, and I dare say I have done wrong in saying what I have."

"Not so, Hellice," declared Lady Redwoode. "And now tell me of Cecile. Is she all I believe her to be?"

Hellice drooped her gaze, and her lips quivered. She was too generous to say anything to the disadvantage of her cousin, and too truthful to respond in the affirmative. Seeing her cruel embarrassment, the baroness did not press the question, but that significant, troubled silence was like a blow upon her heart.

She fixed her eyes upon the dark, lovely face of the maiden, and Hellice was forced to meet her gaze. The girl's glances were full of a strange yearning, a subtle and incomprehensible longing, and the baroness was magnetized by it. With a sudden and uncontrollable impulse, which she could neither understand nor resist, she gathered the little dusky head to her bosom, and showered kisses upon the pale, surprised face.

"Oh, Hellice!" she cried, in a choked voice, "what is this strange feeling that fills my heart towards you? I would have looked coldly upon you because of your parentage, but you have won my love in spite of myself. Hellice, my darling!"

She spoke this tender epithet in a caressing tone, glad tears sprang to the girl's eyes, and she returned the lady's kisses with an enthusiasm that testified how grateful she was for this unexpected display of affection.

"Dear Aunt Agatha," she whispered, "I wish I might always remain with you."

"You may—you shall!" cried Lady Redwoode.

"From this moment, Hellice, you are my adopted child and co-heiress with Cecile of all my property. I will be frank with you and tell you that I have had doubts at times that Cecile is really my daughter. How could it be otherwise, Hellice, when from the hour of her birth I was never positive of the identity of my child? I believed I knew, but I might have deceived myself. And as to my maternal instinct which decided my choice, I tell you frankly, Hellice, that instinct wavered between you both until Cecile moved towards me and called me mother. I thought then that she was my child—I think so now—but my brother's warning recurs to me and I shall cherish you both, assured then that I am wronging neither. This is my decision. From this hour, Hellice, you are my adopted child."

Hellice's countenance was radiant as she thanked the baroness for her kindness, but the radiance was but evanescent. She leaned upon the friendly bosom of Lady Redwoode, and a great yearning arose in her heart towards her, and she wished with all her soul that she were the daughter of the baroness and entitled by nature to her ladyship's fond love.

But she did not give utterance to her yearning.

"Yes, my decision is made," said Lady Redwoode, firmly, "and I feel as if a load had been removed from my heart. I will not delay installing you in your future position, Hellice. As soon as you have sufficiently recovered you will be known as my adopted daughter and take your place as such. And meantime—this very day—I shall make my will, sharing everything I possess equally between you and Cecile."

She prevented any possible expostulations on the girl's part by repeating her caresses, and declaring that she had been sufficiently excited and must be left to repose.

"I will visit you again this evening, dear," she said. "And now I must take your message to Sir Richard. Not a word, Hellice," she added, as the maiden essayed to speak. "You must rest now, and get strong, for to-morrow Sir Richard will expect to see you."

She patted the flushing cheek playfully, and took her departure, carrying in her bosom a heart lighter than it had been for days. She had scarcely disap-

peared when Renee, with a lowering face and angry eyes, came out of the inner chamber and made her way to Cecile's boudoir.

The baroness proceeded to the drawing-room, where Cecile and Andrew Forsythe were engaged in conversation. Sir Richard had taken refuge in the conservatory, a consecrated place to him, and thither Lady Redwoode followed him, finding him standing beside the seat upon which Hellice had sat when listening to his vows.

He turned quickly at the sound of footsteps, revealing a worn and troubled countenance, and grave, sad eyes full of apprehensiveness.

"Will she see me?" he asked, eagerly.

"Not to-day, Sir Richard," answered Lady Redwoode, gently. "She is not well enough, and she thinks your presence would excite her!"

"But I would be very gentle," pleaded the baronet. "If I might only look into her eyes and see how she regards me."

"Fie, you ungenerous man!" said her ladyship, playfully. "If blushes are tokens of friendly regard, then Hellice is your friend. She is growing better, and I promise that you shall see her to-morrow."

The young baronet brightened perceptibly at this promise and at the assurance that Hellice had blushed at mention of him. His fears began to vanish, and he grew at once cheerful and animated.

"I had feared that she was angry with me," he said.

"Angry with you? Nonsense. She will be well in a day or two, and will laugh at your strange ideas. You are not familiar with the history of my niece, Richard," added the baroness, gravely. "Let me confide in you my story, and then I will ask a favour of you."

They seated themselves, and Lady Redwoode narrated all those incidents of her early life with which the reader is familiar, and related also in what manner she had regained her child. She told of her doubts with regard to the two maidens, and her recent decision respecting her adoption of Hellice.

"I shall be happier in providing for her than in treating her as an unwelcome inmate of my home," she concluded. "The favour that I desire is that you will remain to witness a will which I am resolved to make immediately. Do not say a word to dissuade me, Sir Richard, for," and her voice sank to an impressive whisper, "I cannot be sure but that she has stronger claims upon me than Cecile. Come to my private room, and I will send for Mr. Kenneth."

She led the way to her boudoir, going through the drawing-room. Andrew Forsythe was there alone, Cecile having been summoned upstairs by the ayah, and Lady Redwoode requested him to join her, which invitation he accepted. Mr. Kenneth was sent for, and the three gentlemen listened to Lady Redwoode's agitated remarks, and not one of them ventured to combat her resolve. They all believed Cecile to be beyond doubt her daughter, but not one would take the responsibility of advising her to ignore Hellice's existence, in the face of her ladyship's new and strong feeling in the girl's favour. Andrew Forsythe would have protested against a division of the vast property of the baroness, but he had not the courage to do so, knowing that his motives would be plainly apparent and that he would be despised and disregarded for his avicious designs.

"Mr. Kenneth," said Lady Redwoode, turning to the old lawyer, "I have made up my mind, as you see. I should like to make out my will to-day, and these gentlemen will witness it. You will find paper and writing-materials in my desk yonder. Let us attend to the business at once."

Mr. Kenneth acceded to the request, and busied himself at the little inland desk, writing and re-writing, and reading aloud as he progressed, until a final draft of the will was completed, and Lady Redwoode had signified her approval of it by appending to it her signature.

Sir Richard Houghton and Andrew Forsythe signed their names as witnesses, and the scheming brain of the latter, at first angered at the division of the property, began to build up new plans to unite the disaffected fortunes and to bestow all upon Hellice instead of Cecile. He thought to himself that he would then offer his hand to the former, and induce her to marry him, trusting to his personal attractions to wean her affections from the young baronet.

The will was completed in legal form, and Lady Redwoode breathed more freely.

"I will leave it in your hands, Mr. Kenneth," she said, after a moment's thought. "This prompt action has relieved me of many fears and saved me from many anxious moments. Whatever happens now, and whichever is my daughter, both girls are provided for. My brother's wishes have been accomplished, and his daughter as well as mine is amply provided for. I believe that there is nothing more that I can do."



[CRIPPLED.]

The old lawyer assured her that nothing remained to be done, and Lady Redwoode then arose wearily and led the way back to the drawing-room, narrowly missing sight of a figure which had been crouching at her door, listening to the conversation within, and which had sprung up and flitted away before her as she advanced. The figure was that of Cecile, and the fair, blonde face, with its golden hair and bright blue eyes, was full of terrible and deadly meaning that boded little good either to the baroness or to the unhappy Hellice.

(To be continued.)

WHO WAS IT?

CHAPTER I.

"How goes it, Frank? Down first, as usual."

"An ungallant speech, that," and with a significant laugh the major assumed his favourite attitude before the fire.

His companion gave a quick glance at him, and an expression of anxiety passed over his face as he replied, with a well-feigned air of indifference:

"You are rather too sharp, major; I must be on my guard while you are in the house. Any new arrivals? I thought I heard a carriage drive up not long ago."

"It was General Snowdon and his charming wife. Maurice Treherne came while we were out, and I've not seen him yet, poor fellow."

"Aye, you may well say that; his is a hard case—if what I heard be true. I'm not acquainted with the matter, and I should be, lest I make some blunder here; so tell me how things stand, major; we've a good half-hour before dinner. Sir Jasper is never punctual."

"Yes, you ought to know, if you are going to try your fortune with Octavia."

The major walked through the three drawing-rooms to see that no inquisitive servant was eaves-dropping, and, finding all deserted, he resumed his place, while young Annon reclined on a couch as he listened with intense interest to the major's story.

"You know it was supposed that old Sir Jasper, being a bachelor, would leave his fortune to his two nephews. But he was an oddity, and as the title must go to young Jasper by right, the old man said Maurice should have the money. He was poor, young Jasper rich, and it seemed but just, though Madame Mère was very angry when she learned how the will was made."

"But Maurice didn't get the fortune; how was that?"

"There was some mystery there which I shall discover in time. All went smoothly till that unlucky yatching trip, when the cousins were wrecked. Maurice saved Jasper's life, and almost lost his own in so doing. I fancy he wishes he had, rather than remain the poor cripple he is. Exposure, exertion, and neglect, afterwards brought on paralysis of the lower limbs, and there he is, a fine, talented, spirited fellow, tied to that chair like a decrepit old man."

"How does he bear it?" asked Annon, as the major shook his gray head, with a kind of huskiness in his last words.

"Like a philosopher, or a hero. He is too proud to show his despair at such a sudden end to all his hopes, too generous to complain, for Jasper is desperately cut up about it, and too brave to be daunted by a misfortune which would drive many a man mad."

"Is it true that Sir Jasper, knowing all this, made a new will, and left every penny to his namesake?"

"Yes, and there lies the mystery. Not only did he leave it away from poor Maurice, but so willed that Jasper cannot transfer it, and at his death it goes to Octavia."

"The old man must have been demented. What in heaven's name did he mean by leaving Maurice helpless and penniless after all his devotion to Jasper? Had he done anything to offend the old man?"

"No one knows; Maurice hasn't the least idea of the cause of this sudden whim, and the old man would give no reason for it. He died soon after; and the instant Jasper came to the title and estate he brought his cousin home and treats him like a brother. Jasper is a noble fellow, with all his faults, and this act of justice increases my respect for him," said the major, heartily.

"What will Maurice do, now that he can't enter the army as he intended?" asked Annon, who now sat erect, so full of interest was he.

"Marry Octavia, and so obtain his own, I hope."

"An excellent little arrangement, but Miss Treherne may object," said Annon, rising with a sudden kindling of the eye.

"I think not, if no one interferes. Pity, with women, is akin to love, and she pities her cousin in the tenderest manner. No sister could be more devoted, and, as Maurice is a handsome, talented fellow, one can easily foresee the end, if, as I said before, no one interferes to disappoint the poor lad again."

"You espouse his cause, I see, and tell me this that I may stand aside. Thanks for the warning, major; but, as Maurice Treherne is a man of unusual power in many ways, I think we are equally matched, in spite of his misfortune. Nay, if anything, he has the advantage of me, for Miss Treherne pities him, and that is a strong ally for my rival. I'll be as generous as I can, but I'll not stand aside and relinquish the woman I love without a trial first."

With an air of determination, Annon faced the major, whose keen eyes had read the truth which he had but newly confessed to himself.

Major Royston smiled while he listened, and said, briefly, as steps approached:

"Do your best. Maurice will win."

"We shall see," returned Annon, between his teeth.

Here their host entered, and the subject of course was dropped. But the major's words rankled in the young man's mind, and would have been doubly bitter had he known that their confidential conversation had been overheard. On either side of the great fireplace was a door leading to a suite of rooms which had been old Sir Jasper's. These apartments had been given to Maurice Treherne, and he had just returned from London, whither he had been to consult a certain famous physician.

Entering quietly, he had taken possession of his rooms, and, having rested and dressed for dinner, rolled himself into the library, to which led the curtained door on the right. Sitting idly in his light wheeled chair, ready to enter when his cousin appeared, he had heard the conversation of Annon and the major.

As he listened over his usually impassive face passed varying expressions of anger, pain, bitterness, and defiance, and when the young man uttered his almost fierce, "We shall see," Mr. Treherne smiled a scornful smile, and clenched his pale hand with a gesture which proved that a year of suffering had not conquered the man's spirit, though it had crippled his strong body. A singular face was Maurice Treherne's; well defined and somewhat haughty features; a fine brow under the dark locks that carelessly covered it, and remarkably piercing eyes, slight in figure, and wasted by pain; he still retained the grace as natural to him as the stern fortitude which enabled him to hide the deep despair of an ambitious nature from every eye, and bear his affliction with a cheerful philosophy, more pathetic than the most entire abandonment to grief. Carefully dressed, and with no sign of invalidism but the chair, he bore himself as easily and calmly as if the doom of a life-long helplessness did not hang

over him. A single motion of the hand sent him rolling noiselessly to the curtained door, but as he did so a voice exclaimed behind him:

"Wait for me, cousin," and as he turned a young girl approached, smiling a glad welcome as she took his hand, adding, in a tone of soft reproach, "Home again, and not let me know it till I heard the good news by accident."

"Was it good news, Octavia?"

And Maurice looked up at the frank face with a new expression in those penetrating eyes of his.

His cousin's open glance changed not as she put the hair off his forehead, with that kind of caress one often gives a child, and answered, eagerly:

"The best to me. The house is dull when you are away, for Jasper always becomes absorbed in horses and hounds, and leaves mamma and me to mope by ourselves. But tell me, Maurice, what they said to you, since you would not write?"

"A little hope, with time and patience. Help me to wait, dear, help me to wait."

His tone was infinitely sad, and as he spoke he leaned his cheek against the kind hand he held, as if to find support and comfort there.

The girl's face brightened beautifully, though her eyes filled, for to her alone did he betray his pain, and in her alone did he seek consolation.

"I will, I will with heart and hand! Thank heaven for the hope, and trust me it will be fulfilled. You look very tired, Maurice; why go in to dinner with all those people? Let me make you cosy here," she added, anxiously.

"Thanks, I'd rather go in; it does me good, and if I stay away, Jasper feels that he must remain with me. I dressed in haste; am I right, little nurse?"

She gave him a comprehensive glance, carefully arranged his cravat, brushed back a traitor lock, and, with a maternal air that was charming, said:

"Now we'll go in," but with her hand on the curtain she paused, saying, quickly, as a voice reached her: "Who is that?"

"Frank Annon. Didn't you know he was coming?"

Maurice eyed her keenly.

"No. Jasper never told me. Why did he ask him?"

"To please you."

"Me? When he knows I detest the man. No matter. I've got on the colour he dislikes, so he won't annoy me, and Mrs. Snowdon can amuse herself with him. The general has come, you know?"

Mr. Treherne smiled, well pleased, for no sign of maiden shame or pleasure did the girl's face betray, and as he watched her while she peeped he thought, with satisfaction:

"Annon is right. I have the advantage, and I'll keep it at all costs."

"Here is mamma. We must go in," said Octavia, as a stately old lady made her appearance in the drawing-room.

The cousins entered together, and Annon watched them covertly, while seemingly intent on paying his respects to Madame Mère, as his hostess was called by her family.

"Handsome than ever," he muttered, as his eye rested on the blooming girl, looking more like a rose than ever in the peach-coloured silk which he had once condemned because a rival admired it!

She turned to reply to the major, and Mr. Annon glanced at Mr. Treherne with an irrepressible frown, for sickness had not marred the charm of that peculiar face, so colourless and thin that it seemed cut in marble; but his keen eyes shone with a wonderful brilliancy, and his whole countenance was alive with a power of intellect and will which made the observer involuntarily exclaim:

"That man must suffer a daily martyrdom, so crippled and confined; if it last long he will become mad or die."

"General and Mrs. Snowdon," announced the servant, and there was a sudden pause as everyone looked up to greet the new comers.

A feeble, white-haired old man entered, leaning on the arm of an indescribably beautiful woman. Not thirty yet, tall and nobly moulded, with straight black brows over magnificent eyes, rippling dark hair gathered up in a great knot, and ornamented with a single band of gold. A flowing dress of ruby-coloured velvet set off a dazzling neck and arms, decorated like her stately head with ornaments of gold.

At the first glance she seemed a cold, haughty creature, born to dazzle but not to win. A deeper scrutiny detected lines of suffering in that lovely face, and behind the veil of reserve, which pride forced her to wear, appeared the anguish of a strong-willed woman, burdened by a heavy cross.

No one would dare express pity or offer sympathy, for her whole air repelled it, and in her gloomy eyes appeared scorn of herself mingled with defiance for the scorn of others. A strange, almost

tragic-looking woman, in spite of the beauty, grace, and cold sweetness of her manner.

A faint smile parted her lips as she greeted those about her, and as her husband seated himself beside Lady Treherne she raised her head with a long breath, and a singular expression of relief, as if a burden was removed, and that for the time being she was free.

Sir Jasper was at her side, and as she listened her eyes glanced from face to face.

"Who is with you now?" she asked, in a low, melow voice that was full of music.

"My sister and my cousin are yonder; you may remember Tavia as a child, she is little more now. Maurice is an invalid, but the finest fellow possible."

"I understand," and Mrs. Snowdon's eyes softened with a sudden glance of pity for one cousin, and admiration for the other, for she knew the facts.

"Major Boyston, my father's friend, and Frank Annon, my own. Do you know him?"

"No."

"Then allow me to make him happy by presenting him; may I?"

"Not now, I'd rather see your cousin."

"Thank you. I'll wheel him over."

"Stay; let me go to him," said the lady, with more feeling in her face and voice than one would have believed her capable of showing.

"Pardon me, it will offend him, he will not be pitted, nor relinquish any of the duties or privileges of a gentleman which he can possibly perform. He is proud; we can understand the feeling, so let us honour the poor fellow."

Mrs. Snowdon bowed silently, and Sir Jasper called out in his hearty, blunt way, as if nothing was amiss with his cousin:

"Maurice, I've an honour for you; come and receive it."

Divining what it was, Mr. Treherne noiselessly crossed the room, and with no sign of self-consciousness or embarrassment, was presented to the handsome woman.

Thinking his presence might be a restraint, Sir Jasper went away.

The instant his back was turned a change came over both; an almost stern expression replaced the suavity of Treherne's face, and Mrs. Snowdon's smile faded suddenly, while a deep flush rose to her brow, as her eyes questioned his beseechingly.

"How dared you come?" he asked, in an undertone.

"The general insisted."

"And you could not change his purpose; poor woman!"

"You will not be pitted, neither will I," and her eyes flashed; then the fire was quenched by tears, and her voice lost all its pride in a pleading tone. "Forgive me; I longed to see you, and so I 'dared' to come."

"You shall be gratified; look—quite helpless, crippled for life perhaps."

The chair was turned from the group about the fire, and as he spoke, with a bitter laugh, Treherne threw back the skin which covered his knees, and showed her the useless limbs once so strong and fleet.

She shrank and paled, put out her hand to arrest him, and cried, in an indignant whisper:

"No, no, not that! you know I never meant such cruel curiosity, such useless pain to both—"

"Be still, someone is coming," he replied, inaudibly, adding aloud, as he adjusted the skin and smoothed the rich fur as if speaking of it.

"Yes, it is a very fine one, Jasper gave it to me; he spoils me like a dear, generous-hearted fellow as he is. Ah, Octavia, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, thank you. I want to recall myself to Mrs. Snowdon's memory, if she will let me."

"No need of that; I never forget happy faces and pretty pictures. Two years ago I saw you at your first ball, and longed to be a girl again."

As she spoke Mrs. Snowdon pressed the hand timidly offered, and smiled at the spirited face before her, though the shadow in her own eyes deepened as she met the bright glance of the girl.

"How kind you were that night! I remember you let me talk away about my family, my cousin, and my foolish little affairs, with the sweetest patience, and made me very happy by your interest. I was homesick, and aunt could never bear to hear of those things. It was before your marriage, and all the kinder, for you were the queen of the night, yet had a word for poor little me."

Mrs. Snowdon was pale to the lips, and Maurice impatiently tapped the arm of his chair, while the girl innocently chatted on.

"I am sorry the general is such an invalid. Yet I dare say you find great happiness in taking care of him. It is so pleasant to be of use to those we love."

And as she spoke Octavia leaned over her cousin to hand him the glove he had dropped. The affectionate smile that accompanied the act made the colour deepen again in Mrs. Snowdon's cheek, and lit a spark in her softened eyes. Her lips curled and her voice was slightly sarcastic as she answered:

"Yes, it is charming to devote one's life to these dear invalids, and find one's reward in their gratitude. Youth, beauty, health and happiness are small sacrifices if one wins a little comfort for the poor sufferers."

The girl felt the sarcasm contained under the soft words, and drew back with a troubled face.

Maurice smiled, and glanced from one to the other, saying, significantly:

"Well is it for me that my little nurse loves her labour, and finds no sacrifice in it. I am fortunate in my choice."

"I trust it may prove so."

Mrs. Snowdon got no farther, for at that moment dinner was announced, and Sir Jasper took her away. Mr. Annon approached with him, and offered his arm to Miss Treherne; but with an air of dignity, and a gesture of refusal, she said, coldly:

"My cousin always takes me in to dinner. Be good enough to escort the major."

And with her arm on the chair, she walked away, with a mischievous glitter in her eyes.

Annon frowned, and fell back, saying, sharply:

"Come, major, what are you doing there?"

"Making discoveries."

CHAPTER II.

A SPLENDID old dowager was Lady Treherne, in her black velvet and point lace, as she sat that New Year's Eve, erect and stately, on a couch by the drawing-room fire, a couch which no one dare occupy in her absence, or share uninvited. The gentlemen were still over their wine, and the three ladies were alone. Lady Treherne never dined in public, Mrs. Snowdon never gossiped, and Octavia never troubled herself to entertain any guests but those of her own age. So long pauses ensued, and conversation flagged, till Mrs. Snowdon roamed away into the library. As she disappeared Lady Treherne beckoned to her daughter, who was idly touching the keys of the grand piano. Seating herself on the ottoman at her mother's feet, the girl took the still handsome hand in her own, and amused herself with examining the old-fashioned jewels that covered it, a pretext for occupying her tell-tale eyes, as she suspected what was coming.

"My dear, I'm not pleased with you, and I tell you so at once, that you may amend your fault," began Madame Mère, in a tender tone, forthwith a haughty, imperious woman, she idolized her children.

"What have I done, mamma?" asked the girl.

"Say rather, what have you left undone? You have been very rude to Mr. Annon; it must not occur again; not only because he is a guest, but because he is—your brother's friend."

Lady Treherne hesitated over the word "lover," and changed it, for to her Octavia still seemed a child, and though anxious for the alliance, she forbore to speak openly, lest the girl might turn wilful, as she inherited her mother's high spirit.

"I'm sorry, mamma, but how can I help it, when he teases me so that I detest him?" said Octavia, petulantly.

"How tease you, my love?"

"Why, he follows me about like a dog, puts on a sentimental look when I appear; blushes, smiles, and assents to everything I say, if I am polite; frowns and sighs if I am not, and looks tragically at every man I speak to, even poor Maurice. Oh, mamma, what foolish creatures men are!" And the girl laughed blithely as she looked up for the first time to her mother's face.

The mother smiled as she stroked the bright head resting on her knee, but asked, quickly:

"Why say 'even poor Maurice,' as if it were impossible for anyone to be jealous of him?"

"But isn't it, mamma? I thought strong, good men regarded him as one set apart, since his sad misfortune."

"Not entirely, while women pity and pet the poor fellow, his companions will be jealous, absurd as it may be."

"No one pets him but me, and I have a right to do it, for he is my cousin," said the girl, feeling a touch of jealousy herself.

"Rose and Blanche Talbot outdo you, my dear, and there is no cousinship between them."

"Then let Frank Annon be jealous of them, and leave me in peace. They promised to come to-day. I'm afraid something has happened to prevent them; and Octavia gladly seized upon the new subject. But her mother was not to be eluded.

"They said they would not come till after dinner. They will soon arrive, Tavia, and I beg you to give

heed to them. I desire you to be courteous and amiable to Mr. Annon, and before strangers to be less attentive and affectionate to Maurice. You mean it kindly, but it looks bad, and causes disagreeable remarks."

"Who blames me for being devoted to my cousin? Can I ever do enough to repay him for his devotion? Mamma, you forget he saved your son's life."

Indignant tears filled the girl's eyes, and she spoke passionately, forgetting that Mrs. Snowdon was within ear-shot of her raised voice. With a frown Lady Treherne laid her hand on her daughter's lips, saying, coldly:

"I do not forget, and I religiously discharge any obligation by every care and comfort it is in my power to bestow. You are young, romantic, and tender-hearted. You think you must give all your time and health, must sacrifice your future happiness to this duty. You are wrong, and unless you learn wisdom in season you will find that you have done harm, not good."

"Heaven forbid! How can I do that, tell me, and I will be wise in time."

Turning the earnest face up to her own, Lady Treherne whispered, anxiously:

"Has Maurice ever looked or hinted anything of love during the year he has been with us, and you his constant companion?"

"Never, mamma; he is too honourable, and too unhappy to speak or think of that. I am his little nurse, sister, and friend—no more, nor ever shall be. Do not suspect us, or put such fears into my mind, else all our comfort will be spoiled."

Flushed and eager was the girl, but her clear eyes betrayed no confusion when she spoke, and all her thought seemed to be to clear her cousin from the charge of loving her too well.

Lady Treherne looked relieved, paused a moment, then said, seriously, but gently:

"This is well; but, child, I charge you to tell me at once if ever he forgets himself, for this thing cannot be. Once I hoped it might, now it is impossible; remember that he continues a friend and cousin, nothing more. I warn you in time, but if you neglect the warning Maurice must go. No more of this; recollect my wish regarding Mr. Annon, and let your cousin amuse himself without you in public."

"Mamma, do you wish me to like Frank Annon?" This abrupt question rather disturbed her, but, knowing her daughter's frank, impetuous nature, she felt somewhat relieved by this candour, and answered, decidedly:

"I do; he is your equal in all respects. He loves you, Jasper desires it, I approve, and you, being heart-whole, can have no objection to the alliance."

"Has he spoken to you?"

"No, to your brother."

"You wish this, mamma?"

"Very much, my child."

"I will try to please you, then."

And, stifling a sigh, the girl kissed her mother with unwonted meekness both in tone and manner.

"Now I am well pleased. Be happy, my love, no one will urge or distress you; let matters take their course, and if this hope of ours can be fulfilled, I shall be relieved of the chief care of my life."

A sound of girlish voices here broke on their ears, and, springing up, Octavia hurried to meet her friends, exclaiming, joyfully:

"They have come, they have come!"

Two smiling, blooming girls met her at the door, and, being at an enthusiastic age, they embraced in girlish fashion for several minutes, making a pretty group as they stood in each other's arms, all talking at once, with frequent kisses and little bursts of laughter as vents for their emotion.

Madame Mère welcomed them, and then went to join Mrs. Snowdon, leaving the trio to gossip unrestrainedly.

"My dearest creature, I thought we never should get here, for papa had a tiresome dinner party, and we were obliged to stay, you know," cried Rose, the lively sister, shaking out her pretty dress, and glancing at herself in the mirror, as she fluttered about the room like a butterfly.

"We were dying to come, and so charmed when you asked us, for we haven't seen you this age, darling," added Blanche, the pensive one, smoothing her blonde curls after a fresh embrace.

"I'm sorry the Ulsters couldn't come to keep New Year with us, for we have no gentlemen but Jasper, Frank Annon, and the major. Bad, isn't it?" said Octavia, with a look of despair, which caused a fresh peal of laughter.

"One spiece, my dear, it might be worse."

And Rose privately decided to appropriate Sir Jasper.

"Where is your cousin?" asked Blanche, with a sigh of sentimental interest.

"He is here, of course. I forgot him; but he is not on the flirting list, you know. We must amuse him, and not expect him to amuse us, though really all the best suggestions and plans for merry-making always come from him."

"He is better, I hope?" asked both sisters, with real sympathy, making their young faces appear womanly and sweet.

"Yes, and has some hopes of entire recovery. At least, they tell him so, though Dr. Ashley said there was no chance of it."

"Dear, dear, how sad! Shall we see him, Octavia?"

"Certainly. He is able to be with us now in the evening, and enjoys society as much as ever. But please take no notice of his infirmity, and make no inquiries beyond the usual 'How do you do?' He is sensitive and hates to be considered an invalid more than ever."

"How charming it must be to take care of him, he is so accomplished and delightful. I quite envy you," said Blanche, pensively.

"Sir Jasper told us that the general and Mrs. Snowdon were coming. I hope they will, for I've a most intense curiosity to see him," said Rose.

"Hush, she is here with mamma. Why curious? What is the mystery? For you look as if there were one," questioned Octavia, in a low tone.

The three charming heads bent towards one another, as Rose replied, in a whisper:

"If I knew, I shouldn't be inquisitive. There was a rumour that she married the old general in a fit of pique, and now repents. I asked mamma once, but she said such matters were not for young girls to hear, and not a word more would she say. *N'importe*, I have wits of my own, and I can satisfy myself. The gentlemen are coming."

And the three glanced at one another with a keen scrutiny that nothing could escape, then grouped themselves prettily and waited, with a flutter of expectation in each young heart.

In came the gentlemen, and instantly a new atmosphere seemed to pervade the drawing-room, for with the first words uttered several romances began.

Sir Jasper was taken possession of by Rose. Blanche intended to devote herself to Maurice Treherne, but Mr. Annon intercepted her, and Octavia was spared any effort at politeness by this unexpected move on the part of her lover.

"He is angry, and wishes to pique me by devoting himself to Blanche. I wish he would with all my heart, and leave me in peace. Poor Maurice, he expects me, and I long to go to him, but must obey mamma."

And Octavia went to join the group formed by Lady Treherne, Mrs. Snowdon, the general, and the major.

The two young couples amused themselves in different parts of the room, and Treherne sat alone, watching them all with eyes that pierced below the surface, reading the hidden wishes, hopes and fears that ruled them. A singular expression sat on his face as he turned from Octavia's clear countenance to Mrs. Snowdon's gloomy one. He leaned his head upon his hand and fell into deep thought, for he was passing through one of those eventful moments which come to us all, and which may make or mar a life.

Such feelings come when least looked for; an unexpected meeting, a peculiar mood, some trivial circumstance or careless word produces them, and often they are gone before we realize their presence, leaving after effects to show us what we have gained or lost. Mr. Treherne was conscious that the present hour, and the acts that filled it, possessed unusual interest for him, and would exert unusual influence on his life. Before him was the good and evil genius of his nature in the guise of those two women.

Edith Snowdon had already tried her power, and accident only had saved him.

Octavia, all unconscious as she was, never failed to rouse and stimulate the noblest attributes of his mind and heart.

A year spent in her society had done much for him, and he loved her with a strange mingling of passion, reverence and gratitude. He knew why Edith Snowdon came, he felt that the old fascination had not lost its charm, and though fear was unknown to him, he was ill pleased at the sight of the beautiful, dangerous woman. On the other hand he saw that Lady Treherne desired her daughter to shun him and smile on Mr. Annon; he acknowledged that he had no right to win this young creature, crippled and poor as he was, and a pang of jealous pain wrung his heart as he watched her.

Then a sense of power came over him, for, helpless, poor, and seemingly an object of pity, he yet felt that he held the honour, peace and happiness of nearly every person present in his hands. It was a strong temptation to this man, so full of repressed

passion and power, so set apart and shut out from the more stirring duties and pleasures of life, a few words from his lips, and the pity all felt for him would be turned into fear, respect and admiration. Why not utter them, and enjoy all that was possible? He owed the Trehernes nothing; why suffer injustice, dependence, and the compassion that wounds a proud man deepest? Wealth, love, pleasure might be his with a breath, why not secure them now?

His pale face flushed, his eye kindled, and his thin hand lay clenched like a vice, as these thoughts passed rapidly through his mind. A look, a word at that moment would sway him; he felt it, and leaned forward, waiting in secret suspense for the glance, the speech which should decide him for good or ill.

Who shall say what subtle instinct caused Octavia to turn and smile at him with a wistful, friendly look that warmed his heart? He met it with an answering glance, which thrilled her strangely, for love, gratitude, and some mysterious intelligence met and mingled in the brilliant yet soft expression which swiftly shone and faded in her face. What it was she could not tell, she only felt that it filled her with an indescribable emotion never experienced before. In an instant it all passed; Lady Treherne spoke to her, and Blanche Talbot addressed Matrice, wondering as she did so if the enchanting smile he wore was meant for her.

"Mr. Annon having mercifully set me free, I came to try to cheer your solitude; but you look as if solitude made you happier than society does the rest of us," she said, without her usual affectation, for his manner impressed her.

"You are very kind and very welcome. I do find pleasures to beguile my loneliness, which gayer people would not enjoy, and it is well that I can; else I should turn morose and tyrannical, and doom some unfortunate to entertain me all day long," he answered, with a gentle courtesy which was his chief attraction to womankind.

"Pray tell me some of your devices. I'm often alone in spirit, if not so in the flesh, for Rose, though a dear girl, is not congenial, and I find no kindred soul."

A humorous glimmer came to Mr. Treherne's eyes as the sentimental damsel heaved a soft sigh, and drooped her long lashes effectively.

Ignoring the topic of "kindred souls," he said, coldly:

"My favourite amusement is studying the people around me, and discovering their little plots and plans. I'm getting very expert, and really surprise myself sometimes by the depth of my researches."

"I can believe it; your eyes look as if they possessed that gift. Pray don't study me."

And the girl shrank away with an air of genuine alarm.

Mr. Treherne smiled involuntarily, for he had read the secret of that shallow heart long ago, and was too generous to use the knowledge, however flattering it might be to him.

In a reassuring tone, he said, turning away the keen eyes she feared:

"I give you my word I never will, charming as it might be to study the clear pages of a maidenly heart. I find plenty of others to read, so rest tranquil, Miss Blanche."

"Who interests you most just now?" asked the girl, colouring with pleasure at his words. "Mrs. Snowdon looks like one who has a romance to be read, if you have the skill."

"I have read it. Lady Treherne is my study just now. I thought I knew her well, but of late she puzzles me. Human minds are more full of mysteries than any written book, and more changeable than the cloud shapes in the air."

"A fine old lady, but I fear her so intensely, I should never dare to try and read her as you say."

Blanche looked towards the object of discussion as she spoke, and added:

"Poor Tavia, how forlorn she seems. Let me ask her to join us, may I?"

"With all my heart," was the quick reply.

Blanche glided away, and did not return, for Lady Treherne kept her as well as her daughter.

"That test satisfies me; well, I submit for a time, but I think I can conquer my aunt yet."

And with a patient sigh Mr. Treherne moved to observe Mrs. Snowdon.

She now stood by the fire talking with Sir Jasper, a handsome, reckless, generous-hearted young gentleman, who very plainly showed his great admiration for the lady.

When he came she suddenly woke up from her listless mood, and became as brilliantly gay as she had been unmistakably melancholy before.

As she chatted she absently pushed to and fro a small antique urn of bronze on the chimney-piece, and in doing so she more than once gave Mr. Treherne a quick, significant glance, which he answered

at last by a somewhat haughty bow. Then, as if satisfied, she ceased toying with the ornament, and became absorbed in Sir Jasper's gallant badinage.

The instant her son approached Mrs. Snowdon Madame Mère grew anxious, and, leaving Octavia to her friends and lover, she watched Sir Jasper. But her surveillance availed her little, for she could neither see nor hear anything amiss, yet she could not rid herself of the feeling that some mutual understanding existed between them. When the party broke up for the night she lingered till all were gone but her son and nephew.

"Well, madame ma mère, what troubles you?" asked Sir Jasper as she looked anxiously into his face before bestowing her good-night kiss.

"I cannot tell, yet I feel ill at ease. Remember, my son, that you are the pride of my heart, and any sin or shame of yours would kill me. Good night, Maurice."

And with a stately bow she walked away.

Lingering with both elbows on the low chimney-piece, Sir Jasper smiled at his mother's fears, and said to his cousin the instant they were alone:

"She is worried about Edith Snowdon. Odd, isn't it? what instinctive antipathies women take to one another!"

"Why did you ask Edith Snowdon here?" demanded Mr. Treherne.

"My dear fellow, how could I help it? My mother wanted the general, my father's friend, and of course his wife must be asked also. I couldn't tell my mother that the lady had been a most arrant coquette, to put it mildly, and had married the old man in a pet, because my cousin declined her."

"You could have told her what mischief she makes wherever she goes, and, for Octavia's sake, have deferred the general's visit for a time. I warn you, Jasper, harm will come of it."

"To whom—you or me?"

"To both, perhaps; certainly to you. She was disappointed once when she lost us both by wavering between your title and your supposed fortune. She is miserable with the old man, and her only hope is in his death, for he is very feeble. You are free, and doubly attractive now; so beware, or she will entangle you before you know it."

"Thanks, Mentor; I've no fear, and shall merely amuse myself for a week—they stay no longer."

And with a careless laugh Sir Jasper strolled away.

"Much mischief may be done in a week, and this is the beginning of it," muttered Mr. Treherne as he raised himself to look under the bronze urn for the note.

It was gone.

(To be continued.)

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S REMAINS.

—Advice published by the American papers from Repulse Bay, head of Hudson's Bay, dated the 15th of August, give an account of the whereabouts of the Arctic explorer, Captain Hall, in search of the remains of Sir John Franklin. Captain Hall was living on the rocks in the same place he wintered in last winter. During last winter he had been on a journey in search of dogs, accompanied by five men belonging to the whale-ships in the bay and two natives. The party took a north-west course, and were away six weeks, having accomplished their object, but had suffered great privations, living only on frozen deer meat and a spoonful of brandy per day each. Some information Captain Hall received last winter from the natives he fell in with has determined him to winter there this winter. The natives told him that some white men had been with them for a long time, and one of them died and they had buried him with great care. Captain Hall thinks it may be Sir John Franklin, and has determined to try and reach the country and see for himself, so he offered among the whaling-fleet 5000 dollars in gold per man for five men to go with him. The men having wintered did not wish to stay, but at last five good strong men joined, and when they had done hunting this autumn they would start. Captain Hall is sure of obtaining some relics; "at least, if I die," says he, "I shall die doing my duty."

AUSTRALIAN CROPS.—A Melbourne letter says:—"So enormously has our produce of breadstuffs increased recently that we are now witnessing a gradual revolution in the relation of our imports and exports of such commodities. A set of Custom-house returns, published a few days back, affords us the following information:—They show the total imports of barley, wheat, flour, malt, oats, rice, and pulse of every kind during the year 1866, side by side with the imports of the same class of provisions for the first half of the present year, ending the 30th ult. The results are most important, and must be in the highest degree interesting to the English commercial and agricultural classes. The net balance of the value of the imports over the exports of this class

of goods in 1866 was 1,298,727*l*. The net balance of value of the imports over the exports of the same class of goods for the first half of this year is 245,588*l*. There is, therefore, a decrease in the net balance value of imports in the first six months of 1867 of 403,825*l*. On examining the particulars of this change I find them principally under the items of wheat and flour. We have exported in the first six months of this year, principally to England, 122,880 bushels of wheat, valued at 28,555*l*, and 1,974 tons 6 cwts. of flour, valued at 24,892*l*. In 1866 we imported 1,279,474 bushels of wheat, 14,414 tons 15 cwts. of flour, besides very large quantities of other cereals and produce."

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

"CAN I go? Can I face all these people, full of merriment and gaiety? Can I play my part in the farce?"

I was walking restlessly up and down my room as these thoughts passed through my mind. Upon the bed lay my evening-dress of rich garnet silk—a present from my uncle—while my cousins had added the pretty head-dress, gloves, slippers, and snowy handkerchief.

For many years I had received this annual addition to my wardrobe, for my birthday came on the first of January, and my uncle Stanhope always gave a New Year's party.

We, mother and I, Uncle Stanhope's sister and niece, might have made our home in the large house where two fair daughters and one son formed my uncle's family; but my father had left at his death a small cottage and a narrow income, and mother preferred to live by herself and bring me up after her own notions. So my rich uncle contented himself with frequent visits, never coming empty handed, always bringing noble Christmas, New Year's, and birthday gifts, and invitations to all the gay doings at the large house.

He had given a sullen consent to my being educated for a teacher, but never would hear of my accepting any position after I left school; and, indeed, an mother's very feeble health was always an argument of sufficient strength to make me submissive.

Now, had the party about which I was so unhappy taken place upon any other day, I should have sent an apology, but the New Year's gathering was one of the prides of my uncle's heart. To stay away, except for urgent necessity, would have deeply wounded his kind heart.

My dress, as I said, was always his birthday gift, and he looked for me from the time I was a tiny child clinging to my mother's finger, till now, when seventeen years of life admitted me into the ranks of young-ladyhood.

"If I could only stay at home!" my heart cried, in pain over the prospect of the party.

But there was no excuse, and I dare not whisper my real reason for the reluctance. I wore no mourning-dress. I could not speak the agony in my heart, and yet I felt that my mother, when they carried my father to his grave, was not more desolate, more widowed than I on this New Year's evening. One little week before I had held a hand within my own that became chilled with death's cold ere I released it—had left a kiss upon the brow, cold in the last sleep, and seen a form confined, and carried far from me, for whose love and welfare I would have given my life. But we were not married, not even betrothed, so I had no right to mourn.

Just one year before, at Uncle Stanhope's New Year's party, I first met Charles Hall. He seemed to me the very impersonation of young, hopeful life, full of merry speeches, gay jests, fresh witticisms, dancing well, conversing well, singing sweet songs with expression and talent. He was twenty-six or seven; I, sixteen. He, devoted, gallant, and tender; I, young, enthusiastic, and inexperienced. He had come to our small town to study law under Mr. Wilson, whose dear, fat, motherly wife made a pet of the young man at once.

Well, it was the old story. I loved him. He was at our house very frequently, and we walked, sang, chatted; yet there was no spoken word until—but first I must tell my story.

He paid me marked attention, but it was only when we were alone that he let me believe he loved me. He carried on a kind of flirtation with half the girls in our circle, so nobody supposed his attentions to me "meant anything."

Just one week before the New Year's party I was in our little parlour, putting all the furniture in order. Charles had gone home one month before on a visit, and was coming back that day. From our door to the railway station was but a few steps, and he would stop, I felt sure, on his way to Mr. Wilson's.

The five o'clock train was nearly due, and I ran

out to give the servant new directions about tea, and had but just returned to the parlour when I heard the whistle. The train was in.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and then—oh, how did I bear it!

Four men brought a shutter up the street, and stretched upon it was Charles.

He had slipped in leaving the platform, falling under the carriages as they started, and was crushed. My mother was out, but the men brought him in—ours being the nearest house—and, after placing him upon the sofa, went away, one for a doctor, the others to their own duties.

He knew me.

"Don't try to do anything," he whispered. "Let the doctor see me first! But it is useless, after all. Come to me, darling, my darling."

And I knelt by him, too faint to speak.

"Poor little one!" he whispered again. "I meant to greet you differently. I went home, my precious, to pave the way for our marriage. But now"—the great beads of cold perspiration were on his face—"you love me?" he gasped.

"Oh, Charles!" I sobbed, "you know I love you."

What followed is too sacred for any but my own heart to know.

When my mother came, accompanied by the doctor, they found only the dead form, and I crouched down beside it, almost insensible.

The next day the body was sent home, while I was too stunned to comprehend the loss. They were all very kind, thinking I was nervous from the shock of so sad and sudden an event, but nobody knew my secret. I buried it away in my heart, and nobody guessed it. And now I must go to a party. I was still trying to nerve myself, when my mother called me. I hurried down at once, and found her lying on the bed, half dressed.

"I am afraid I cannot go to-night, Agnes," she said, "but you need not stay. It is only one of my old attacks. I must bear the pain while it lasts, but if you will give me the drops, I shall probably sleep till you come home."

Mother's old attacks being a chronic form of spinal complaint, I was not alarmed, but rubbed, patted, and nursed her till the pain left her, and the anodyne began to make her drowsy.

"Now go and dress," she said.

"I shall not leave you," I said, kissing her.

"But your uncle will never forgive us. I am not ill enough. Agnes, it is not my illness! I have waited all the week for you to speak. Tell me, my child, why you want to stay at home."

And I told her. Sure now of loving sympathy, I let my grief have its way.

"My poor Aggie," she said, caressing me, "that is the reason you have clung to your old black silk all the week. Well, darling, I am too ill to be alone, so write to your uncle, and let Mary take the note at once."

"And you will sleep now," I said, observing for the first time her struggle against the powerful anodyne she had taken to still the pain.

"Yes, I will sleep."

I wrote my note, dispatched the servant, and then sat down beside my mother, who was by that time in a deep sleep.

It was about nine o'clock. Mary had availed herself of my permission to stay and assist my uncle's servants, if she wished, and I was still seated in my mother's room, when the train from London came up to the station, stopped, and went on again. I had never heard the whistle since that fatal afternoon without a shudder, and I was in no condition to bear a shock when our door bell rang. Thinking it was Mary, I went down.

"Is Miss Tolman in?"

I staggered back from the speaker. Was Charles Hall alive again? Did he stand there to mock me?

"Forgive me; I have startled you," and two strong arms lifted me and carried me into the parlour, for I was reeling with the shock.

"You are Agnes," he said, when I began to recover my composure, "my little sister, then. I am Gerald Hall."

Charles's twin brother, of whom I had heard him speak a thousand times.

"I came to Milford," he said, "to bring some letters I thought might comfort you, and also to see if you would come to my mother for a short time. She is too feeble to travel—perhaps you know she is lame—and she longs to see you. Your mother's kind letter stated you were with my brother at the last, and she wants to talk with you, to see the dear Agnes our Charles loved."

I was sobbing like a child while he spoke. It was so sweet to feel they owned me, would love me, knew my sorrow. No need of pride here to hide my heart wound.

He did not stay long, but promised to return in the morning, and see if my mother could spare me

to go to that other mother—so suddenly and fearfully bereaved. When he left me he placed in my hands a package of letters.

My mother was still sleeping when I returned to her room, and I drew my chair to the shaded lamp, and opened the letters.

They were addressed to the mother and only brother of my lover, in his own dear hand, and they were a complete journal of his interest, friendship, and love for me.

To a mother whom he idolized, a twin brother, who was a second self, he poured out his very heart, and it was all mine.

Daylight broke in at the windows before my mother awoke, or I stirred from the table. A night of such joy, such grief, so full of sadness, sweetness, and suffering, I pray that I may never spend again.

The next day Gerald called.

My mother sent for Uncle Stanhope, and told him all, winning me a new friend in my grief. It was arranged that I was to go for a week to London; and farther, my dear uncle himself proposed a change in my dress before I visited the family of which I was to have been a loved member.

My cousins came to me, and two pretty black dresses were made by their busy fingers, assisting the dressmaker, a black bonnet and shawl purchased, and by the next day I was ready for my journey.

Nothing could exceed the kindness of Gerald during that brief visit and journey. He called me sister, with a gentle, affectionate inflection of the voice that moved me almost to tears; he guarded me so carefully from all melancholy sounds or sights on our way, was so attentive and kind, that it seemed as if my heart would break to have him there, with Charles's face, voice, manner, and kindness, and yet not Charles.

It was on a dreary, cold afternoon that we reached London, and then I was surprised to find the home to which I was driven was one of magnificence such as I had never dreamed of in our quiet country town.

One of the London mansions, a legacy from a merchant prince to his wife and twin sons. Charles had always spoken of himself as in easy circumstances, and I knew he spent money generously, but I had never dreamed of such luxury as this.

We crossed a broad hall, ascended a wide staircase, and then came to Mrs. Hall's bedroom.

"Come in," said a sweet voice, in answer to my knock. "Come in, Gerald, and—Agnes with you?"

He put me forward gently as he opened the door, and I saw a small figure near the fireplace.

A tiny old lady, with soft white hair, and the face of an angel, looked up at me with a smile of welcome, that yet was sadder than tears.

In an instant I was kneeling beside her, while she removed my bonnet, and caressed and kissed me.

"My daughter," she said, fondly, "my boy's darling, our Agnes!"

And a thousand fond, gentle words followed.

"It was so kind of you to come to me," she said. "I am a cripple, dear, and cannot leave my chair, except to be lifted to the bed, or I would have come to you. We know all about you, dear, how good and true you are, how devoted to your mother, how prettily you sing and play, all your accomplishments and beauty, from the fair lily complexion to the large dark eyes. We know it all, love, we know it all," and she patted my hand, looking into my face with yearning tenderness. "You read his letters?"

"All, everyone," I said. "How can I thank you enough for letting me see them?"

"You must thank Gerald, dear. But you will give me mine again, Agnes—my boy's letters. I will let you have them when I die. Gerald knows."

He had gone quietly away when I entered the room, but after a time he came for me again, and showed me to my room.

"Lie down an hour," he said, "and then we will have dinner quietly in my mother's sitting-room. We wheel her chair in there when she is able to bear it. Rest awhile, little sister, and I will come for you again."

A week soon passed, and I learned to love with a deep, grateful fondness the dear old lady who had welcomed me so kindly.

In return for what I told her of Charles's stay in Milford, and his last moments, she told me of his early life, his boyhood, his manhood, his desire to become a lawyer, instead of joining Gerald as his father's successor in business. And she told me, too, of Gerald, the tender, good son of her declining years, of his grave, thoughtful disposition, so different from his brother's sunny, merry temperament; of his care for her, his home-loving disposition, and his high standing as a man of integrity and honour. Her boys—the only children who had ever called her mother—were a never-wearying theme for her—a never-ceasing interest for me.

I saw but little of Gerald. He was busy about some important business. I found myself—a month after my return home—mistress of five thousand pounds, and a letter from Mrs. Hall, begging I would consider it Charles's legacy to his widow.

Two years glided away very quietly. I wrote often to Mrs. Hall, who always called me her daughter, and who shared a mother's title with my own dear mother. We did not move from our old home, but I was glad to fill it with all the pretty comforts we had often sighed for, and to lavish upon my mother flowers, fruit, and the choicest delicacies. We wore our quiet mourning—she the widow's dress she had never resigned since my father died, and I the same black I had worn on my first visit to London.

Two years of peaceful, loving happiness together, and then my mother died. The long, wasting disease took an acute form, and after three months of painful illness she left me to join my father.

My uncle came to me at once, and took me home; we had a funeral from the large house, and then I folded my hands, and prayed to die. There was nothing for me now I said in my wicked repining; other hands could distribute my money amongst the poor, and I could die and meet all I loved in heaven. No words can describe the bitterness of those days. The old sorrow had been comforted and soothed by the tender love that I had lost now. My mother, my lifelong companion, was gone, and I was alone in the world.

Uncle Stanhope was very kind, Lizzie and May affectionate, Harry sympathizing, but they all had their own interests and duties, while I stood alone.

Lizzie was going to be married, and had her trousseau to arrange, her lover's visits to receive; Harry was preparing for a tour; May was very deeply interested in the study of German; uncle had his business to attend to, and the interests of three children at heart. I, only, was alone.

Judge, then, of my deep gratitude when Mrs. Hall wrote to invite me to make my home with her. She was very feeble, and needed a daughter's love; would I take her in my dead mother's place, and let her love and comfort me? Uncle grumbled a little, but let me go.

"Remember," he said, "Agnes, this is only for a long visit. Milford cannot spare you always, and this must be your home. Promise me to think of my house as your home. And, Aggie, when you are able to bear gaiety, you will come to the New Year's party? Lizzie will come home, then; May, too, if she marries. Let it be a family reunion for the future. You will come?"

I promised all his kind love demanded, and then went to London.

My welcome there was a loving, cordial one, but I found a new member to the quiet family.

"My niece, Martha Hall," said the old lady, after greeting me, and a tall figure rose up from a corner, and said:

"Good evening," and then sat down again.

I did not get a good look at her until the next morning, when she burst into my room. Then I saw a blonde, tall, fair, and gloriously beautiful, dressed in an eccentric way that my inexperience did not recognize as "fast."

"Good morning," she said, abruptly. "How do you like it?"

"Like what?" was my astonished inquiry.

"Why, this slow, stupid place. Oh, I forgot, you are in mourning, so you can bear it. I suppose I am in mourning, too, or ought to be, but I won't wear black. What's the use? I never saw papa for eleven years. Went off, you know, to Russia, and left me at boarding-school, and there died and bequeathed me to aunt and Gerald. I've plenty of money somewhere, they say, and next year, being of age, I mean to use it, and be gay. Till then I've got to vegetate here. Oh, mercy, I did hope when I heard there was a young lady coming there would be some life, but you look as slow as the rest."

"I have just lost my mother," I said.

"Dear me! have you? That is bad. Mine died when I was ushered into this world, so I can't be expected to feel much about it, being probably more concerned about 'here we go up, up,' 'little Jack Horner,' and literature of that description for some time afterwards. By the way, what do you think of Gerald? He's to be my husband, you know."

"No, I had not heard."

"Bless you, yes; and if he don't die on account of it, it's a mercy. The old folks arranged it all. Papa wrote to auntie, and I'm to stay here till I am of age, and then marry Sir Prim. If he were not so awfully solemn, I might endure it, but the one ruling desire of my life is to see him turn a somersault, vault over a chair, or do something else equally absurd."

"I am afraid you will never be gratified."

"No, I suppose not, especially since you are here

to keep him in countenance. Perhaps I'll marry him, perhaps I shan't. Is this blue thing becoming?" she said, abruptly, walking to the glass, to see the jaunty little jacket indicated. "I like red, but I can't wear even pink without looking like a Dutch milkmaid. You could, now, with all that splendid black hair. Where on earth did you get your complexion, with black hair and eyes? You're as fair as I am, though you have no colour. But what a little thing you are. I could carry you in my arms like a baby."

"I was always small," I said, scarcely knowing how to answer her.

"Well, I didn't suppose you had grown smaller at your age. Heigh-ho! Shall we always stagnate this way?" and she sat down, and began to nurse her own foot.

I looked at her in perfect wonder. In my quiet life, in our own little town, I had never met with a specimen of the fast young lady, and this beautiful, vehement creature puzzled me amazingly. All her hair was worn in a little crop of short curls, wonderfully becoming; her large, well-opened blue eyes were full of light and fire; her fair complexion was tinged with glowing colour, and her tall figure was perfect in all its proportions; the little hands nursing the pretty foot were small, and yet full of nervous debility.

"You'll read to auntie now, won't you?" she said, "and I can practise more. The only comfort I have is in making that piano ring."

"I will read to her," I said.

"Well, go, then—it's her hour. Isay—" and then she hesitated. "Kiss me! I am not half such a heathen as I look, and your face is as pure and perfect as a Madonna's. You must not hate me. I am not half so bad anywhere else, but I am half stifled in this horribly dull place."

I kissed her at once.

"You can come here," I said, "and talk, if it does you any good. I suppose it is rather sad for a young girl full of life."

"Anybody would think you were eighty at the least," was the reply; and then she darted off, and in a few moments the great house resounded with music. I never heard such a voice, even in a concert-room. A pure, clear soprano, yet with the deeper notes marvellously perfect. She played brilliantly, and sang exquisitely.

How can I describe the life that opened for me? All the morning I spent with Mrs. Hall, reading, and having, by her taste and desire, open to me the real treasures of literature, a complete course of the best authors. We read history, poetry, fiction; we wandered over the old authors; we dipped into newer works; we thoroughly enjoyed the hours. What was really a keen pleasure for her was a never-ending delight for me. The afternoons were devoted to walking, reading, or driving.

Martha, or Mattie, as she preferred to be called, rode splendidly, and I attended a riding-school, and soon became sufficiently accustomed to the exercise to join her and Gerald in their long rides. Our evenings were spent in music, or else quietly in Mrs. Hall's room, for Mattie soon formed a circle of friends, and plunged into the vortex of London society. A relative of her mother—Mrs. Marsfield—one of the votaries of fashion, undertook to chaperone the brilliant beauty, and Gerald was often released from attendance upon her, and joined his mother and myself in our quiet sitting-room. I learned to accompany him as he played the violin, and to blend my voice with his in duets, and if we could not translate melody as brilliantly as Mattie, we, at least, enjoyed our music as fully.

I would like to pause here, and leave the rest untold, and yet—well, you will guess it. I, who knew the cousins were engaged, knew that Gerald was willing to marry Mattie, and considered himself bound to her; I, who was there because I was considered true to my first love; I, a double traitor to past and present—loved Gerald Hall.

I did not know my own heart for many long months. It was a dear brother's love I received, a tender sister's affection I gave, I said to my heart; and so unconsciously I let his image grow to my soul, till I could not tear it away. Charles faded away, and a face, his—and not his—took his place. The merry, sunny laugh was never so dear as was now the grave, tender smile.

More than a year had gone by, and December chill was in the air, when Mattie came to my room one morning, with unwonted clouds on her fair face.

"Here's a confusion," she said, taking me as usual into her confidence. "Auntie reminds me this morning that next week I shall be of age, and you know all about Gerald and me. I think myself he's in love with you! Gracious, don't jump that way, Agnes. Of course, I don't suppose you care for him, you quiet mouse; for you are infinitely too proper to love another woman's fiancé, and then there was that wonderful Charles. But he is fond of you. If it

were not for auntie, now; but you see she's set her heart on the match. Well, there'll be one suicide, for Guy Howard will hang himself!"

"Guy Howard?"

"You don't know him; Mrs. Marsfield's nephew; a man after my own heart, with some spirit. Well, never mind him!"

But she did mind him I saw, for she sat quiet for some moments.

"We'll have to submit," she said, at last. "It is a mercy you don't care for Gerald, for it's all arranged now. You'll come to the wedding, I suppose; and please wear white, for I am superstitious about colours at a wedding."

And she went off, leaving me in a strange turmoil of pain and irresolution.

I could not stay! I loved him! Not with the girlish love I had given Charles, but with a woman's whole heart. I loved him! I could not stay to see him married, and married too to a woman who loved him not. Some wild scheme of warning him of Mattie's feeling rushed through my brain, but I discarded it, and resolved to go away. I would go somewhere and hide myself and my new sorrow from all eyes. Then I thought of my uncle. Only two days more and he would welcome his guests to a New Year's party again. I had met Charles there; I had first seen Gerald on that anniversary; I would go, and live one night in memory of happier days, and then—then—well, the future would decide. So I went to Mrs. Hall and told her I was going to Milford.

"You will return soon?" she said, wistfully.

"You will be alone," I said, "when Gerald takes his wife for a wedding tour. Then I will return."

She held my hand a moment, looking into my face with a loving, pleading gaze, that nearly unnerved me.

"Yes," she said, "I shall be alone. It was her father's will, you know, and I would like to see Gerald happy."

I kissed her for answer. It was not well to talk about it, and then I bade her farewell. I felt that I could not meet Gerald again.

My uncle's welcome was cordial—nay, more, it was very loving. He was glad I remembered his pet anniversary, and I promised to lay aside my mourning for that evening, and try to forget sorrow for the time.

Lizzie was home with her handsome husband by her side; May was engaged, and had another new face to present to me; Harry was back again from his tour, and uncle was in his element. The evening was clear and cold, pleasant as a winter's evening could be. Early hours were kept at Milford, and the rooms were well filled by the time that Mattie would have been dressing her hair. I wore a white silk dress, and Lizzie had twisted some jasmine sprays in my hair.

The dancers were all in motion, everybody gay and full of life, when I stole out into the library for a moment's repose. It seemed as if my heart would break. The rush of memory and present pain was so keen, so bitter, that I could scarcely keep from crying.

So, standing by the window, pressing my hot forehead on the cold glass, I tried to still my anguish and maintain the composure necessary for the evening. While I stood there a step crossed the room. It was my uncle or Harry I said, and did not stir till I was drawn into a close embrace, and the voice I loved best spoke:

"Agnes, my darling, my love."

"Let me go!" I cried.

He loosed his hold at once.

"Oh, Agnes, do you not love me?"

"Where is Mattie? How can you come here?" I said.

"Mattie! Agnes, do you think I care for Mattie?"

"But your mother?" I said.

"My mother would not see me an unloving and unloved bridegroom. We have had our explanations, Agnes. Mattie is engaged to Guy Howard, and I have come to seek my wife here. Is she here, Agnes?"

"I don't know; shall I inquire?" I said, fancy for the first time, in the flood of happiness. And then I nestled into his arms, and let him tell me his love, while he read mine I am sure in my face.

But this was not all. Uncle Stanhope came in, Lizzie was called, a long pause followed, and in a sort of blissful dream I found myself under Lizzie's long lace wedding-veil, standing by Gerald, the old clergyman of Milford facing us, all my old friends and neighbours surrounding us; and Uncle Stanhope's party was transformed into my wedding breakfast.

S. A. H.

DEATH OF THE PRINCE OF SIAM.—Letters from Bangkok on the 5th of August announce the death

of the eldest son of the King of Siam, heir-apparent to the throne. His official title was Krom Mu'a Mahesuarsivavilas. He was born in 1823; his mother was descended from the former royal dynasty. On the demise of the second king, in January, 1866, he was appointed to some of the important military and financial functions that his uncle had discharged. He died on the 25th July last, leaving twenty-nine younger half-brothers, thirty-three half-sisters, children of the present King; and of his own descendants eleven sons and eight daughters, with two grandsons and four granddaughters. The King has published a formal announcement of his death, hoping that "every one of his good friends" will sympathize with him, remembering that the same path has to be trodden by all, who will fall in due course "like the leaves and flowers and fruits of trees," all subject to drought and corruption. The King announces the death of his Highness Mom Kratal Rajoday, who accompanied in the quality of interpreter the Siamese Mission to England in 1857.

THE ABYSSINIAN TELEGRAPH.—Arrangements have been made for organizing a telegraphic service in connection with the Abyssinian expedition, by means of which it is hoped that both India and England will be kept informed of the progress of the expedition.

THE SILENT PARTNER.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It is time to explain the plot by which Alfred Lee hoped—slightly hoped—to effect his escape from prison and from death. We premise that no violence was premeditated, and that what strategy could not effect must be left undone.

Neither Allen nor Luke would have risked their lives in an attempt to overpower and bind the guards—fruitless of any results as such an undertaking would probably be, except ruin to its projectors.

They sought to accomplish their ends by milder means, and hoped, even if they were frustrated and detected, that no very weighty punishment would ensue. But Allen's risk was very slight; as to Luke, his attachment to Alfred, and his hope of the dazzling reward which he was to earn, made him blind and deaf to any personal danger.

"I'm an old man," he said, "and it is not much matter what comes of me—so long as they don't hang me—and they won't do that."

The plan, then, was to apparel Mr. Lee exactly like the mock minister as possible, and pass one out under each guard. That is to say, the Rev. Mr. Brown was to take his departure before Hess returned to his duty at eight o'clock, and soon after that Hess was to be called upon to let him out again, on which occasion it was hoped that Mr. Lee might be passed through in his stead.

Hess's mind had been prepared for this ruse by Allen telling him when he came in that he wanted to spend three or four hours with the prisoner, and he would not be surprised to hear that he was still inside when he returned to his evening duty.

All hope of success in this plot depended primarily upon the relieved guard, at eight o'clock, not informing Hess that he had let the clergyman out. This, it was hoped, he would not think of doing, unless asked; but, on the other hand, the probability was very great that he would be asked. It would seem most natural that Hess should inquire on returning to his post, "Is the minister in there yet?"

Escaping this seemingly fatal contingency, there yet remained the additional peril of Alfred's detection at the moment of his attempted egress. How keen the keeper's habits of observation were they did not know, or how slight a peculiarity of face or figure, voice or movement, might excite his suspicions and subvert all their laborious schemes.

Could Mr. Lee maintain the necessary composure to go coolly through this ordeal? Could he command his voice, his eye, his step? All this remained to be seen, and Louis did not fail repeatedly to caution him with regard to the necessity of preserving tranquil nerves.

"I think I shall be perfectly self-possessed," Alfred said. "You may have observed that some people, who are sadly vexed at trifles, grow calm in the presence of a great danger. I think I belong to this class."

"I hope it may prove so."

Even while they conversed, the gallows was in process of construction in the back yard, and Mr. Lee and Mr. Hartley both avoided the windows, for they knew too well what was going on outside. On that morning, too, an undertaker's man, whose business Alfred well understood, had been in the prison,

measuring the young lieutenant with his eye. If he could keep cool amid these combined horrors, his must be an heroic soul indeed.

But how was it, it will be asked, that Lieutenant Lee, brave, unselfish and generous, as he is represented, could embrace a scheme for escape which did not include the safety of his friend? That friend compelled him. The plot indeed was chiefly of Louis's invention, and by tears and entreaties, backed doubtless by that strong love of life which is inherent in every heart, he had induced Alfred to accede to it.

"If they punish me," Louis said, "it will not be capitally, and anything short of that I shall joyfully bear to procure your escape. Do you call me friend, and yet believe that our enemies can inflict any punishment on me equal to that of seeing you led out to execution? Should not I suffer ten-fold more from that than from any solitary imprisonment, hard labour, or coarse fare?"

"I know you would suffer, Louis."

"Then save me from it. My heart will be lighter than the lark's the moment you are safe. I care not what else occurs. Besides, when once you are free, with a small portion of the wealth at your command, perhaps you may in some way effect my release."

"I will spend my last pound for it, Louis, if I get off."

"Nay, it is not worth a very great sacrifice. I have no friends to pine for me."

"No friends. Good heavens! And such a heart!" Nothing was attempted in the way of disguising Mr. Lee while Mr. Allen remained, it being considered safest to put this off until a short time before changing the guard, lest that officer should look in upon them and discover the pretended minister.

But the garments were compared and changes made to render the resemblance as complete as possible. Alfred watched, too, and observed the deportment and gait of Mr. Allen as closely as possible, and when the latter, about six o'clock, prepared to go out he said to him:

"Leave me your books, Mr. Allen. You will not need them, and they will add a great deal to my clerical character."

He left them, of course, and, having knocked to be let out, he said, in a drawing voice, as the guard opened the door:

"Luke will stay with the prisoner an hour or two, and as he is now in a most encouraging frame of mind I should like to have him left undisturbed by other visitors. Will you see to that?"

"Yes," replied Shaw, curiously. "I won't let anyone in if you say so; and I'm sure I don't want to go in to their psalm-singing."

This man Shaw had, of course, not been neglected in Alfred's distribution of gold, and he had heard of the promised legacy, which rendered him accommodating, though it could not make him civil.

The supposed minister walked slowly off, and the guard resumed his walk, now and then sitting down to rest on a stool which stood near the door. Alfred did not begin to assume his new character until after seven o'clock, at which hour their supper was usually sent in; but when this was received, and they were pretty sure of being unmolested for a considerable time, he and his coadjutors went vigorously to work. The problem before them was not only to disguise Mr. Lee, but to robe Mr. Hartley in the lieutenant's clothes, while some kind of a lay figure should supply Louis's place in the bed.

Then, if Alfred got out unchallenged, the guard looking in would still seem to see the two prisoners left—Louis; personating his friend, sitting at his bedside talking, and thus give to the escaped man perhaps a whole night's start of his pursuers.

This was their magnificent programme, and it was one at which at present all could work; for, while the prisoners dressed, Luke was busy in constructing a figure out of the pillows of the two beds, together with some of the discarded apparel, which would have some resemblance to a human being.

His work was easily accomplished, especially as Louis often lay down with his clothes on, and now his stuffed coat with one bent arm thrown outside of the blankets supplied his place. Something dark was placed for a head, and as the position of the image implied that the face was turned towards the wall, the absence of so material a part of the person would not be really noticed.

The least scrutiny, of course, would reveal everything, but it was good enough for unsuspicious eyes, in a room half lighted at best, and which it was hoped the guard would not enter until twilight or a still later hour.

The lieutenant's disguise was very perfect. Nothing was wanting to complete his resemblance to the supposed clergyman.

"After all," he said, when Luke and Louis had exhausted their powers in expressing their delight at the

inimitable transformation—and Mr. Lee solemnly paced the room with the Bible and psalm-book under his arm—"I am but the counterfeit of a counterfeit."

No one could be more indisposed to make a jest of sacred things or of the ministerial calling than Alfred Lee. His education, his habits of thought, the momentous peril which he was confronting, all forbade such a course; but he felt fully justified in all the strategy in which he was now engaged, while his able condutor, who was in reality a member of the Methodists, was equally conscientious, not only in giving him his earnest co-operation, but in sending up many a mental prayer for the success of their daring enterprise.

"I keep thinking it is Mr. Brown himself every minute," said Luke, laughing; "and I declare I believe that Shaw would let you out again, if you should knock. He would think he was mistaken about your going before."

Mr. Hartley, in the lieutenant's clothes, looked sufficiently like him as he sat at the bedside, with his back to the door, slightly bending over a Bible which rested on his knees.

But it was impossible to avoid a general trepidation—say, terror—during all these proceedings, since they could not for a minute make perfectly sure of not receiving a visit from the guard who had let Mr. Allen out.

As the hour approached they breathed freer, and prepared for the speedy trial of their fearful experiment.

"Here, Louis," said Mr. Lee, "take this slip of paper and pencil, and write on it, 'Baxter's Saints' Rest.' He knows my hand, I fear, as I have occasionally sent out memoranda by Luke."

Mr. Hartley did as he was requested, and Alfred, handing the paper, said:

"Now, Louis, when I knock to be let out you must go ahead, give this paper to him, and tell him it is the name of some book that the minister wants him to get for Mr. Lee."

Luke looked at the speaker and at Louis in a bewildered state of mind, and said:

"Yes, I will."

"That will divert his attention a little while I walk past."

"Yes, sir."

"And give him this money to buy the book with."

"Yes, sir."

"And if he speaks to me I can't answer, you know, because he would know my voice. So you must reply in some way for me, while I sigh, shake my head, and pass on."

"Yes, sir, I will; I'll say something."

Eight o'clock struck in an adjacent steeple, the guard was changed outside, and Mr. Lee, who listened intently, heard the clangour of a musket dropped from the shoulder to the floor, and thought also he heard the relieved guard walk off, although not until after an interval sufficiently long to admit of several questions being asked and answered.

Had the momentous inquiry been made? Alas! a few minutes were now to decide that question, either to intensify the brilliant hopes which had been raised, or to quench them in the blackest despair.

At twenty minutes past eight, it being now almost dark within the prison, and twilight without, Mr. Lee shook hands with Mr. Hartley, and bade an affectionate farewell; then, with his books beneath his arm, he advanced with calmness to the door, and knocked.

Then, falling behind Luke, whose terror, unfortunately, became extreme at this moment, and threatened to betray the whole plot, he whispered:

"Brother Luke, look to your paper, and remember 'Baxter's Saints' Rest.' Be a man now."

The sound of withdrawing bolts was heard, the door swung slowly open, and Hess partly entered, but at the same instant he started in evident surprise, and said, addressing the disguised man:

"Why I thought Shaw said he had let you out! He did say so, I am sure."

"Yes," said Luke, at the same time thrusting the paper forward. "Mr. Brown went out to get a book, but he came back again; and now Mr. Lee wants you to get the book for him to-night, and bring it to him early to-morrow morning, and here's the money to pay for it. But he don't want to be disturbed to-night. Can you read the name?"

Hess, who from habit had glanced through the room, and saw, as he supposed, the lieutenant at Mr. Hartley's bedside, and the latter as usual in bed, now looked at the paper and began to spell out the name; while Alfred slowly walked past him, and stood in the hall, just outside of the prison door, where lamps were already lighted. Here he waited in suspense for Luke; but the latter lingered, trying to get the keeper out without his going any nearer to Mr. Hartley.

"Oh, yes, I can read them, and if I can't it don't make any difference," said the man, putting the paper in his pocket and advancing into the room.

"He wants you to send for them immediately, before the shops shut up," said Luke, in a whisper, catching hold of his arm; "and he don't want to be disturbed now, because he's reading and praying. The minister talked beautifully to him, and he was very much affected."

Still Hess advanced, and Louis, sliding from his seat, fell upon his knees and buried his face in his hands as they rested upon the bed.

But the keeper was not closely watching him—he had advanced only to remove the dishes which had contained the supper for the two men, but, perceiving that they had been untouched, he turned away softly and walked out, looking the door behind him even with a subdued noise.

"You needn't take the books to him till you come on duty in the morning. He wants to read the Bible and pray, write letters home to-night, talk to Lewy; he has plenty to eat and drink there, and hopes you won't come in nor let anyone in."

Hess gave a grunt, whether of assent or disapproval it was difficult to say, and Alfred, fearful that Luke would overdo his part, walked on, and turned an angle of the hall, whither the other at once followed him. He did not know the way out of the building, or he would perhaps have departed sooner, without waiting for the old man.

They had still to pass a sentinel near the street door, another in front of the building, and the lieutenant, bidding Luke keep close to his side, conversed with him with seeming earnestness as they went along, in order that he might avoid looking at these men without seeming purposely to do so.

He sighed heavily as he drew near the first man, and said, slowly:

"The words of these death-bed repentances, Brother Luke, is that we can never pronounce with certainty upon their genuineness. All seems fair with the young man—he seems to be humble, he seems to repent."

They were outside now, where the twilight still lingered. There were several soldiers loitering about, and the sentinel was marching, automaton-like, to and fro upon the sidewalk.

Mr. Lee continued, looking only at the attentive man:

"He seems to repent not only of his private sins, but of the greater crime of having joined this cruel army."

The men looked curiously after the imaginary preacher, and indulged in some scoffs and jests as they walked slowly away. But the sentinel stopped suddenly in his walk, and, turning, looked after them with a puzzled air. He had seen the minister pass out but a little more than an hour before, and had not seen him return. How was it that he was now going in the same direction again?

"There are two of them, perhaps," he said. "These black coats always swarm about such places, or he has passed me perhaps unawares."

But his doubts did not seem quieted. They occurred again after an interval, not exactly as suspicions, but his curiosity was piqued. How had the minister passed twice in so short a time, in the same direction, without being seen to return? For Gallard thought he was very observing, and that he saw everything that was going on within the scope of his vision.

He walked his beat a few times more, and then he stopped and spoke to the sentinel at the door about it. He, too, had been thinking of the same thing.

"There's two of them I think," he said, "and one must have gone in before I came on."

"But I've been on duty since two o'clock."

"Well, it's easy enough to ask Hess. I don't think there's anything out of the way, though."

Gallard walked through the hall, and unconsciously kept time with his step to the sound of the hammer upon the growing gallows in the yard of the prison.

Prompted by curiosity, he passed Hess hastily and went to look at it. It was nearly dark, and the carpenters were about quitting their work, which was far from being completed, and he listened a moment to some directions about the width of the structure and the length of the cross-beam. He had never seen a gallows before, and he wondered whether he would be permitted to witness the execution. Then, conscious of being remiss in his duty, he hastened back and said to Hess:

"Were there two ministers in there this afternoon?"

"No, only one."

"Was he there twice?"

"Yes," replied the man, remembering what Luke had told him about the clergyman going out after a book, "yes, twice."

"Oh! All right, then; but it's very strange."

"What's strange?"

"Why, Joe and I both saw the man go out twice, but neither of us saw him come back."

Gallard hurried off as he said this, lest his absence from his post should be noticed, and left the slow-witted keeper to reflect on what he had said.

Being impressed with the idea that the minister did go out twice, without reflecting on the source of his information, Hess only wondered that neither of the men should have seen him come back, and then he returned to the train of thoughts which the sentinel had interrupted—perhaps a contemplation of his expected legacy in the morning.

But as second impressions, in some minds, are more forcible than the first, the words of Gallard soon recurred to him, and with them came the undefined idea that something was wrong, or at least incongruous.

He would at least make sure that he was all right, and, although disliking to disturb his profitable prisoner, contrary to his repeated injunctions, he determined to look in.

He opened the door as softly as possible, yet not without some noise, and went in. There was the lieutenant sitting by the bedside, leaning over and talking to Mr. Hartley in bed. The room was barely light enough to show this, and Hess hesitated whether to advance or retire.

He however advanced.

"Shall I light your lamp?" he said.

"No, no!" replied Mr. Hartley, in a whisper, for he knew that his voice would betray him if he spoke loud. He motioned to the keeper to go back, as he spoke, but he did not dare to look around.

There was something strange in this, and for the first time Hess's suspicions were really excited. He no longer hesitated, but walked quickly up to Mr. Hartley and attempted to look into his face, and as this was studiously averted from him he next glanced at the bed, where the nature of the deception which had been practised upon him became at once apparent. He seized the stuffed figure, pulled it partly up, then, letting it drop down again, he sprang upon Mr. Hartley, and, seizing him forcibly, turned his face towards the light.

With a terrible oath he next thrust the young man from him and demanded:

"Where is the lieutenant?"

Louis did not reply, and the enraged man again flew at him with the ferocity of a tiger, grasped him by the throat and repeated the question.

Mr. Hartley struggled, but did not speak; and when the frantic man had administered half a dozen sound blows upon the head and face of his feeble antagonist, accompanying each one with a question which elicited no reply, he saw that he was only losing valuable time, and he desisted from farther violence.

Then, rushing to the door, he shouted for help, and as footsteps were heard he cried out:

"An escape! An escape! Quick! Give the alarm! Mr. Lee has got away! Oh, heaven! what shall I do?"

The alarm spread. Half a dozen men rushed in and asked various questions, while Hess, with shaking hands, lighted a lamp and explored the room, thinking it possible that the lieutenant was not gone, but might be concealed in the apartment, watching for a chance to slip out.

This hope being abandoned, he was obliged to admit that he must himself have let Mr. Lee out disguised as a clergyman, and that that was the secret of the second minister whom they had all seen.

"But he can't be far away!" he said. "We'll soon have him! Come on, boys! It's impossible for him to get away, for he has not been gone a quarter of an hour."

"Wait for the provost! wait for the provost!" said one; "he'll be here in a minute."

Some waited, and some followed the half-demented Hess, who ran out swearing that he would wait for nobody, but that he would capture both Mr. Lee and Luke, or would kill them if the least resistance were made.

The provost soon came in, breathless with haste, followed by a dozen subordinates, and, gathering as quickly as possible all the information he could, he dispatched an officer and a guard of half a dozen men at once to Luke's house, and sent others to notify the police, in order that the principal points of egress from the town might be watched.

"Spread the alarm everywhere among the inhabitants," he said to the men as they went out. "Cry it as you would cry a fire! I'll have the bells all ringing in a few minutes."

CHAPTER XIX.

ALFRED'S heart beat high with hope as, with his



[MR. LEE'S ESCAPE.]

guide, he turned into another street, and quickened his pace away from the prison, upon whose gloomy walls the shadow of his gallows would fall ere another sun had gained the meridian sky.

He breathed freer as he advanced; his heart palpitated with joy, his soul poured out its thanksgiving to its Maker; and yet he knew that his peril was still imminent, and that any moment might turn his rejoicing into woe.

They proceeded nearly in silence, for they did not dare to converse on the subject uppermost in their thoughts until they were secure of not being heard by any chance listener.

Luke led the way to his own house, and as soon as they were in it, and the door locked behind them, he said, almost breathlessly:

"Now then, we mustn't stay here ten minutes. I have got him all safe so far. What do you think of that?"

His wife came forward trembling and said:

"I think we shall all be hung, Luke, if we get caught at this; but I am glad he's off. How do you do, sir?"

Mr. Lee shook hands with the wife of his benefactor, who immediately added:

"But we can die but once, if it's heaven's will, and I have been praying ever since the old man went out—every minute."

"Yes, yes, but where's Allen?" asked Luke, impatiently.

"He got tipsy, Luke; he is upstairs fast asleep! He came back and said 'twas all right, and he'd done his part, and he gave me that" (showing a gold piece) "and said I must go and get him some whisky."

"You were a simpleton to do it."

"I didn't do it, Luke; but he swore he would go himself if I did not with his black clothes and sell them, so I just gave him our bottle, that we had six months in the house. He cannot speak now, and only groans when I shake him."

"Well, never mind him, then. Get the old clothes—quick now! There is no time to talk."

In a twinkling a new disguise was brought, which had been prepared for the lieutenant several days before by his directions and under Luke's advice, and in this he quickly robed himself.

It consisted of such clothes as common labourers wear, all old and shabby—a high-crowned, battered hat, and coarse boots down at the heel and white with mud. An old stock encircled his neck, and Luke ran his ten fingers to and fro through his neatly brushed hair, tangling and tossing it like new-mown hay spread out for drying.

Mr. Lee had left a considerable part of his money

with Mr. Hartley (all that he could induce him to take), and the remainder he and Luke had brought with them.

Luke now intended to accompany him in his flight.

This was highly satisfactory.

They did not lose time in the conversation, which took place while Alfred was putting on his new disguise. A basket of provisions was ready packed before the arrival of the expected fugitives, so that Luke's limit of ten minutes was scarcely exceeded before all things were ready for starting.

Luke took up his basket, and, nodding a good-bye, bade Alfred follow him, which the young man did with great alacrity, for he had dreaded momentarily an irruption of soldiers into the house.

It was dark now.

The sky was slightly clouded, and the street in which they found themselves on leaving the house was one but little traversed in the evening.

But they had barely crossed it, and walked a few yards eastward on the opposite side, and near the edge of the river, when a sound of running and loud talking was heard, and the two men stopped to listen.

The noise proceeded from a street which ran at right angles with the one in which they stood; but it came momentarily nearer, and soon voices were heard seemingly near the house which they had just left.

They stayed to hear no more, but moved rapidly and silently on. There were no buildings on the south side of the road; the river was there, with piers at irregular intervals, and a few vessels, of various sizes, moored beside them.

They hurried on past all these, and stopped before a small cottage on the shore, in which there seemed to be no light or sign of human life.

Luke knocked softly at the door, which was almost immediately opened by someone who must have been waiting close at hand.

The room into which Alfred followed his guide was so dark that he could see only the outline of the person who admitted them, who seemed to be a tall, spare man.

He was, in fact, one of Luke's *complices*, to whom alone, besides his wife and the drunken Allen, the momentous secret had been entrusted.

His rôle was to hire a skiff, for the avowed purpose of fishing very early the next morning, and to bring it round early in the evening, and moor it at some point near the house.

"Ha, you have the boat, Jake?" was Luke's quick inquiry.

"Y—yes—no—not quite," said the trembling eager old man.

"Heaven have mercy on us!" said Luke. "There's the bells a ringing the alarm now, and—"

"Yes, but I expect it every moment, Luke. I spoke for it, and Josh went after it, and took the money to pay for it. I stayed here to wait for you. I'll go myself now. You come to the river, and I'll tell you where to wait."

They went, and an interval of terrible suspense ensued while on the spot designated by their companion they awaited his return. They could no longer doubt that the escape had been discovered; every bell in the town seemed to be ringing, the distant roll of a drum was heard, and now and then a shout came to their ears, evidencing a general commotion.

"I'm afraid they will punish my poor wife," said Luke, in a whisper; "but they can't hang her, can they, Mr. Lee?"

"No, certainly not, and I do not think she'll be harmed."

"There's that poor fool Allen. They'll catch him, as sure as possible."

"Yes, and they'll force him to tell all he knows."

"He don't know much. He don't know anything about the boat."

"But, Luke, the noises grow louder. I hear a trampling off here to the left. They'll place guards all along the river shore, and perhaps are coming for that very purpose now."

"They are, Mr. Lee. 'Twould be just like them. That provost is the wide-awake fellow I ever saw. But here comes the boat."

There was the boat, sure enough. Jake stopped a little way in front of them, and let out his grandson, Josh, whom he was unwilling to trust.

"You go up to the house, boy; I'll fasten the boat," he said.

Josh went willingly enough, and Luke and Alfred were speedily in the boat, with their baskets of provisions beside them.

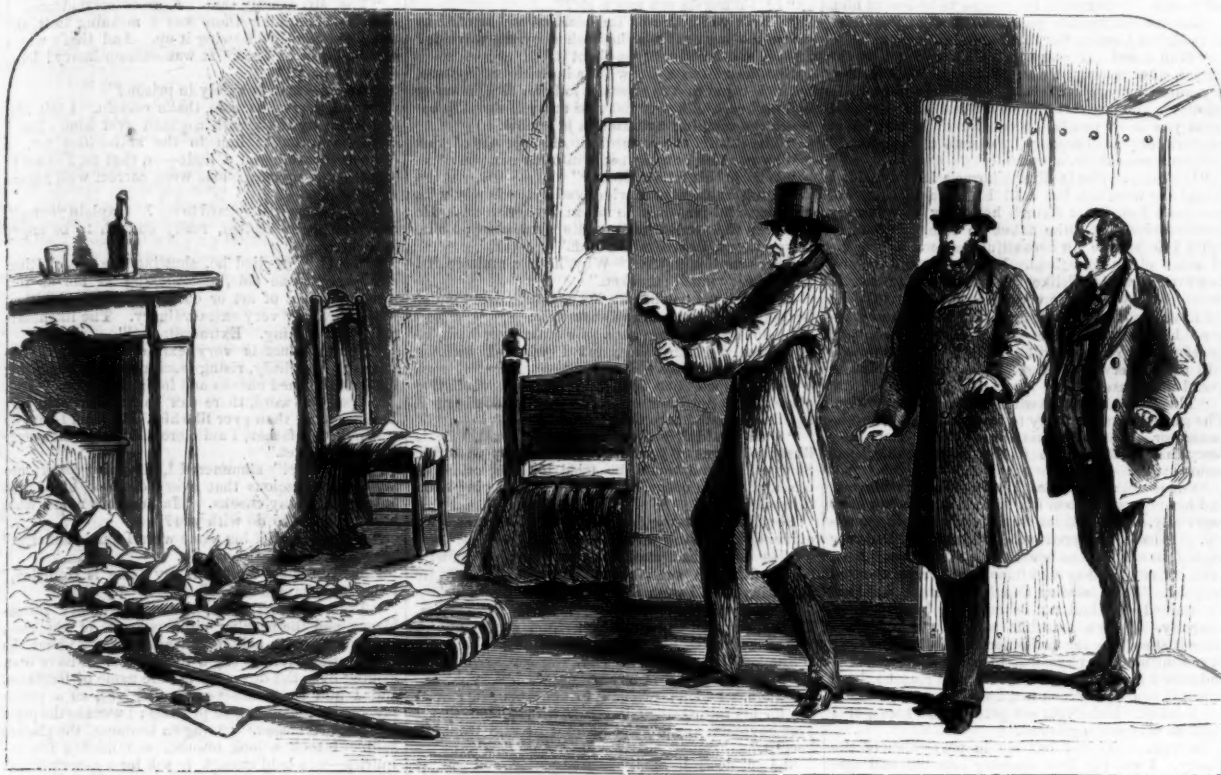
"Have you paid him?" asked Mr. Lee, who seemed to forget nothing.

"Yes, every thing, and twenty pounds to pay for the old skiff, which ain't worth ten."

Alfred shook hands with the old man, slipped another piece of gold into his palm and then pushed off the skiff.

"Let me row," whispered Luke. "We must go slow and still. I'll get her out in the stream, and let her drop down with the current till we get a good way out of the town."

(To be continued.)



[THE BIRD FLOWN.]

THE FIRST SMILE. A Christmas Story.

CHAPTER V.

Hunt: I smell a fox hereabouts, Yoriks!
Sir John: Stand thee back, stand thee back. Thou shalt see sport here, I warrant thee.

Peel's Country Wife.

"Let go my collar. I tell you, I won't allow it. I ask this gentleman if you've any right to stop me in this style." The man turned to me appealingly, and I noticed that he set his under lip in a stern, ugly manner, and clenched his great hand menacingly.

Mr. Sharpe put his hand in his breast-pocket, with an ironical smile playing over his lips. He drew it forth again, and the polished tube of a pistol pointed threateningly at the man's breast.

We all saw that every one of those round, ugly receptacles held its missile, and only needed the hammer's click to fly forth upon its errand.

The man tried to speak, but his lips refused to articulate.

"Is it really so? Have you a right to arrest him?" asked I.

"To be sure. There's been a reward waiting five years. If he chooses, this fellow can unravel a very serious affair. But see here, Gaspard, I am going to be kind to you if you will confess everything."

Gaspard's teeth chattered.

"Hold out your hand. There, now, my handkerchief is strong silk, and will answer for a bracelet, especially with the pistol so handy. What good luck it was you happened to come out of those bushes, and that this young gentleman was here! Extraordinary! I don't think I should have known you, if you hadn't said that about your 'Mr. Lionel.' I hadn't heard it for years, but only those living on the Mossy Glen could give it that pronunciation. Stand there, now, while I get the horse. If you stir an inch I shall fire."

A spark of savage rage burnt in the man's eyes, but he stood motionless when Mr. Sharpe had released his grip.

While the latter was arranging the bridle he spoke to me, in a low, hurried voice:

"Mister, it's by your means I've got into trouble. If you hadn't called me to the horse, I should have been off. I want you to do an errand for me, and it will be little trouble. You say you are at the Thorpes'. There's a woman there, one Rona Zagonini; you can find her out if you don't know her. Tell her what has happened here, and say to her

that it is one she knows, who was to have met her. Tell her she'll hear from me shortly, one way or the other."

He paused abruptly, for Mr. Sharpe came back, looking at us both rather suspiciously. Miss Thorpe was still sitting on the grassy bank, with one hand shading her eyes.

"Here's help at last," exclaimed I, thankfully, as a coach came clattering down the street.

All the men, perched on the top, and hanging to the steps, in the fashion of all the early-hour conveyances, dismounted and clustered about us. One of them was the much-desired veterinarian, and he proceeded to take poor Bess into his care. I sent him to give Miss Evelyn Thorpe the verdict—no help for the poor creature.

She heard it with more calmness than I anticipated, went over to the spot, and, kneeling down, laid her hand on poor Bess and said, sorrowfully:

"Forgive me, Bess. It was my cruel pride in your fleetness which has brought you to your death. But I can only promise you that it is my last race. Good-bye, Bess; my beautiful Bess, good-bye!"

And when she said this she rose and turned her grave face away from observation, and we knew that a few natural girlish tears marked the pain of parting.

"And now, Mr. Holliston, let us take our places in the coach, and get back to town as quickly as may be."

I assisted her into the vehicle, and then walked back to where Mr. Sharpe stood, still keeping close watch over his prize. A sudden conviction had flashed upon me since I had been reflecting upon the man's message to Rona Zagonini. I laid my hand on his shoulder, and said, quietly, in as matter-of-fact a tone as I could assume:

"Gaspard, I have something to say to you as well as to him. You met Rona Zagonini and someone else in the arbour of Mr. Winthrop Thorpe's garden at two o'clock last night."

He started as if he had been shot, and I saw in a moment that my guess was right. It was all I wanted. I asked Mr. Sharpe where I should find him that evening, and, obtaining the information, took my place in the coach.

We walked a little distance after we left the coach, but were both silent and preoccupied. As we ascended the steps of the mansion she looked up in my face, a smile on her lip, but a bead of dew still hanging on her eyelashes.

"What a sorry return for so gay a setting out! I hope you won't think me too silly, but poor Bess lies heavy on my conscience. If I had not been racing."

"I think you very kind-hearted and sensible. But you were not at all to blame."

"Will you be so good as to tell Winthrop? I shall hide my diminished glory in my chamber; for you will not need me, will you, if you have letters to write?"

"I hope you will not condemn yourself to a lengthy banishment. Did your brother value Bess as much as you?"

"Oh no; she was mine. Did you think me afraid of a scolding? I could have given her away and not missed her at all, for Thomas has a new horse training for me. It is only because the poor thing came to her death through me. See Mark staring at my crushed hat! Well indeed, it has only just occurred to me what a far more tragical coming home it might have been. We ourselves might have been maimed or killed. I ought to be thanking heaven for its mercy. And here is Winthrop. Tell him of our adventure."

And as Mr. Thorpe appeared in the hall she slipped away, and left me to make the explanations. I went into the library with him, took a glass of wine, and while sipping it told him of the fate of Bess. He seemed extremely thankful that his sister and myself escaped without injury, and then left the subject for one in which he had a nearer interest.

"And now, Mr. Holliston, what do you think about this man my wife saw last night? I encourage the others to believe it only as an illusion of the imagination; but, do you know, I am pretty well convinced it was the gentleman for whom you are looking—our thief, in fact!"

I bent my head, as if in consideration of the subject; but in reality I was revolving in my mind the query if it were wise to share with Mr. Thorpe the knowledge I had so singularly obtained. I finally concluded to give him only a part.

Looking up then with a smile, I answered:

"Indeed, sir, I hope you will not persist in that belief, for I am quite convinced it was I myself, retreating to my room, who so unintentionally alarmed Mrs. Thorpe."

"You? Why didn't you say so at once?"

"Because it would hardly do to tell a part and withhold the rest," returned I, composedly. "There really was an intruder on the place, and I was watching him."

"A man? I have missed nothing else."

"I am still very much in the dark, though I have two or three clues to follow up. Will you be good enough to leave me unquestioned a little longer? There is, unquestionably, a connivance with this man from members of your household, for there were two

who came out from the house and talked with him. I think he has become possessed all that you have missed, but I am on the track to follow him up."

"Well done! If you accomplish so much at the outset, what may we not expect in time? Don't fear my annoying you with questions. Come and tell me whatever you are satisfied about, and leave the rest until you have proofs. I wonder if it will affect matters for you to accompany us into the country?"

"Rona goes there, of course?"

"Certainly. She is Mrs. Thorpe's lady's-maid. I would she were not, but until I have actual proof of her guilt I shall not disturb her. My wife is very generous-hearted. She takes to Rona not half so much I do believe for her skilful services as because of some old associations. But, as I said before, however I might dislike the girl, I should not interfere except for some very serious matter. When we have proofs it will be time enough to show Imogene how mistaken she is in her confidence and generosity. Yes, she will go out of town, as indeed will all the servants, except James, who remains to guard the house."

"Then I don't think it will affect my investigation. The girl is certainly privy to the robbery, if not the instigator. More than this I cannot say. I am very sorry that I should have frightened Mrs. Thorpe so seriously."

"She is not well at late. We have been rather gay, and her nervous system has suffered. For her sake especially, I am anxious to get away into the country. I have managed quite dexterously, I flatter myself, in eluding our usual circle of visitors. I am quite convinced that it is important for Imogene to be quiet. Those fainting attacks alarm me, and I am determined she shall not be annoyed by crowds of company. Evelyn must flit away to a watering-place if she cares for excitement and liveliness. I have sent for the physician to call, as if casually, and take a look at her. And that ring may be from him. If you will excuse me, I will go back again to her boudoir. Make yourself perfectly at home, or I shall be very much grieved."

He went away and left me in possession of the library. I put the door opening into the hall ajar that I might see if Rona Zagonini came down, and then sat down with a book. But my thoughts were not upon it. They were going over again and again the connecting links of my romance. To tell the truth, I scarcely dared admit the secret even to myself, the vague suspicion which haunted me.

I was standing within the door, when finally Rona made her appearance. I had not seen her before in her holiday attire; but now she was evidently prepared for the doctor's visit, possibly she was not unmindful of the effect upon me. She was certainly about as wild and picturesque an object as I had ever seen, and insensibly my thoughts strayed off to the descriptions I had read of lovely Italian peasant girls.

She wore a bodice of crimson velvet over a white undervest, laced across with fimsy cord, which fell in heavy gold tassels at her waist. The skirt of her dress was of some oriental fabric, thin and gauzy, and yet strong and firm, with alternate stripes of blood-red and silvery white. Her long black braids were tied with a broad ribbon, and long gold ear-rings tinkled against the gold bead necklace at every shake of her head.

Perhaps she saw the pleased expression on my face, for she paused without any signal from me.

"Good morning, sir. I am glad to hear that you escaped so fortunately. Miss Thorpe will be cured now, I fancy, of her morning drives."

"Come into the library, Rona. I want to speak with you for a moment."

"As long as you please, for the doctor is in there with Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe, and they sent me away," she answered, with a little courtesy.

And as I closed the library door she said, with a coquettish toss of her head:

"Why do you look at me in that way? What are you thinking about?"

"Well, I was thinking that you were very good-looking, if you must know."

"Has it taken you all this time to find it out? Your valet has keener perceptions than his master. He gave me a compliment the first moment he saw me, and has managed to find opportunities to whisper half a dozen more since."

"My valet? What, John Marvin? Has he arrived? I did not know it."

"He is up in your room, investigating into your careless management of the wardrobe. He is not so very bad-looking himself, if he were only the master, instead of the servant," she returned, with a saucy smile.

"John is steady and sharp enough to be his own master before long. But I have something else to say now. I want to tell you of this adventure of ours, and how queerly enough you are mixed up in it."

"I? What do you mean, sir?"

"Didn't you hear that the accident was caused by a man leaping out from the bushes by the wayside? Listen, and I will tell you about it."

She heard the story with admirable composure, until I came to the message to herself. Then her eye flashed, and her breast rose and fell stormily beneath the seething agitation in her heart.

"The cat! the cowardly loon!" ejaculated she.

"Why need he drag my name into his scrapes?"

"Who is this fellow, Rona?"

"A miserable wretch who lived in the family with me, and presumed to fall in love with me. He has been the torment of my life ever since; for he is so violent, I am afraid of him."

"Presumption indeed! Why, he is a mulatto, if I am not very much mistaken."

She gave me one bright, keen glance from under her jetty eyelashes as she answered:

"I don't know, I am sure. But whatever he is, he is intensely disagreeable, and I wish—I wish he were out of my way."

She stamped her foot, and an evil, vindictive glare transformed her eyes into such a likeness to a tiger's infuriated orbs that I shuddered.

"Well," said I, as carelessly as I could, "he is likely to be out of your way. I judge by what Mr. Sharpe said, he would be tried for some crime or other, and if he be guilty he is likely to be in prison for awhile."

She did not answer, but stood with downcast eyes, evidently revolving what I had told her.

"He is a bad man!" muttered she, slowly.

"I shouldn't be surprised at any wicked story he might invent. I wish I had never seen his face."

"I wouldn't have anything more to say to him. The prison will exonerate you from any claims of his," I returned.

She laughed contemptuously.

"You think he is my husband, but you are mistaken. I don't pretend to deny that he claims me for his future wife; but it is a falsehood that I ever gave him any promise. And if I had, I wouldn't keep it."

She put down her foot again savagely, and walked directly out of the room. I went upstairs to look after John Marvin.

CHAPTER VI.

There in that turret, far from sight,
With none his solitude to share,
Securely at that fearful height,
The captive sat in blank despair.

RELEASED from my surveillance of Rona's movements, I turned my thoughts rather feverishly towards this man Gaspard. It was important that I should find out about him before any legal proceedings were commenced. I took out the card I had received, examined it carefully, and pondered upon how I should be able to obtain an interview with Gaspard, and at the same time escape the exceedingly sharp eyes of Mr. Sharpe. While I was still cogitating on the method of proceeding I was taken by surprise by a tap at my door.

I opened it, and there stood John, and behind him Mr. Adam Sharpe himself. I could scarcely conceal my astonishment enough to give him a courteous welcome.

"Good day, Mr. Holliston. You see that I am following up the acquaintance very promptly. But I got into such a restless fever I couldn't rest, and I concluded I might as well finish up the day in the business. I hope I don't intrude, coming into your chamber. As my talk was likely to be somewhat confidential, I concluded it was better to come here. Hum, yes! Extraordinary!" And Mr. Sharpe settled himself into the chair by the window.

He looked sharper, more wily and shrewd even, than on my first introduction to him. I found myself stealing furtive glances at his face, wondering if it had not grown into life from out some comic illustration of a wily villain or miser.

His nose was like an eagle's beak, the chin pointed, the cheeks thin and hollow, of a dead, cold tint, and all the vigour and life of the whole system seemed diverted to the small, glassy and restless eyes, of a pale blue, that in strong emotion, I noticed, took a greenish tint. His hair, which was pushed back and cut short, looked like a gray, bristling roll around his narrow, peaked forehead. I could not overcome the chill his presence gave me, and though he assumed the most affable manner possible, I had all the while the sensation that a vulture was hanging over me.

John interpreted my look, and withdrew.

"And how have you managed with the man you took this morning, Mr. Sharpe? It was certainly very singular that you should have happened upon him in that way. Quite a coincidence."

"Yes, sir, exactly that. A great coincidence. I can't help thinking there was a meaning in it, and so I've set about following it up. And that's why I came to you at once. It was extraordinary! hum, extraordinary!"

"And the man is safely in prison?"

"Well, yes, he is safe, that's certain. I left him locked in my room with a guard over him. But I have not brought him to the authorities yet. I came to consult you a little—or, that is, I came to ascertain if my suspicions were correct with regard to you."

"Suspicious with regard to me? Explain yourself, Mr. Sharpe," I replied, ready enough to be angry with him.

"Humph!" replied he, shutting one eye, putting his head on one side, and looking at me as if I were an object of art or curiosity upon exhibition. "It is certainly very extraordinary. The likeness is really astonishing. Extraordinary!"

"Your conduct is very extraordinary, sir," returned I, laughingly, rising from my chair, and facing him with flushed cheeks and indignant eyes.

"Upon my word, there can be no other solution. You are more than ever like him. If Lionel Lenterne was not your father, I am more mistaken than ever I have been yet."

"My father!" stammered I, dropping back into my chair, unconscious that every drop of blood was fading out of my cheeks. "In heaven's name, what has my father to do with you?"

"A great deal, if his name were Lionel Lenterne," answered Mr. Sharpe, coolly.

"But you know very well my name is Holliston," I returned, impatiently.

"True. Nevertheless, the extraordinary resemblance, and the peculiar circumstances of the case, embolden me to ask if you are positive about the thing. Stay, let me say a little more. I have been looking over the directory for the name of Holliston, and I find the name your card gives, as a young lawyer just setting up in practice; I went to the place and found it closed. 'Away on business,' the placard said. I took a look around, and made a few inquiries—was bold enough to ask for a description of this young lawyer away on business. To be sure all things don't agree—a poor lawyer, and a petted guest in a grand house like this. But I have got used to discrepancies which a little explanation can smooth away. Now, I have only one thing upon which to build my hope of finding you to be the son of Lionel Lenterne, and that is your striking likeness to him. I come to you, not only with friendly motives, but with the power to give you, if, as I conclude, you are the same young lawyer, a good position in the world. The Lenterne estate is a fine one, and will be delivered up any time the heirship is proved."

All the while he talked that cold, piercing eye was on my face, and seemed to read my very thoughts, dizzy and confused as they were.

I put my hands over my face, almost giddy with the conviction that flashed upon me. My own history was never a pleasant theme to me. I had always turned away from it impatiently. I remembered my mother, pale, grave, almost stern, in her black dress, and calm, unsmiling face. Of course she loved me. Mothers always do, and must, they tell me.

But even when a child my heart ached for the warm demonstration of love which I never received. She was scrupulously careful of my welfare. I missed no attention that any child ever received from a parent's kindness, but she never caught me in her arms with tender passion, as I have seen other mothers do. She had no fond caresses, no playful, endearing words.

I knew that her life had been very unhappy. She told me so as soon as I came to years of understanding. She said that my father was a wicked, sinful man, and she would rather I should ask nothing about him, assuring me that I should repent sorely any investigation into his history. I had always tacitly accepted her explanation, and tried to drive the whole matter from my thoughts.

She sent me to college, although it sorely crippled her narrow means. When I look back upon it now I see that she took pleasure in denying herself any little luxuries to be able to gratify me; and I feel assured that it was out of her consciousness of the dearth of love received by me that she offered compensation of another kind.

Perhaps it was my strong likeness to the husband who had ruined her life that repressed the natural current of affection. She told me once that in a certain box, I could find a written history, not only of her married life, but of my father's subsequent history. It was her wish that I should leave it unmolested, but if I had any desire to obtain the particulars there they were.

She died suddenly, while I was yet in college, and I only reached home in time for her funeral. I

packed up her few effects, used what money was left in finishing my term, and went my way into the world.

"I thought it all over how, sitting there under Adam Sharpe's keen eye.

"I knew just where that box was packed, in which corner of the great chest out there in the distant farmhouse. I had never touched it. It was almost like lifting the valve holding down some ghastly ghost to think of it.

"And really and truly I did not need any such assurance. A cold conviction crept into my very blood. The man was right—I know he was. This Lionel Lenterne, who had bequeathed me his form and features, was really and truly my father.

"Gaspard saw it, Adam Sharpe was convinced of it, and I felt, 'in my bones,' as the old nurses say, that it was so.

"I looked up at last, pale, I knew, and my voice was husky, but I had obtained self-command again.

"Well, Mr. Sharpe, supposing I admitted that your supposition was right, what then?"

"Why, then, I shall lay my propositions before you. I can put you in possession of a pretty home and a very comfortable income, neither of which, I judge, will be very unwelcome to you. Humph, not so extraordinary."

"He paused, with what seemed to me a leer, rather than a smile.

"Not if they come with honour," answered I, sternly; "but I will lend no countenance to any villainy."

"Bless me, what a saint! My dear fellow, is there anything wrong about a son's inheriting his father's property, which has been waiting five years for him?"

"But how will it benefit you?" I asked, finding it impossible to make a friend of him.

"He writhed momentarily, then recovered extra briskness.

"Me? Why, of course, I shall charge you for my services; I shall get the reward, too, for discovering the heir; and—and—I shall ask you to make out a bill of sale to me of one of the houses belonging to the estate."

"Well," said I, "we have not yet proved that I am the man you think. I acknowledge that I know nothing about my father, but I can obtain proofs in a week's time."

"Make no delay; the matter has rested long enough. But there is no question about it in my mind. That fellow's astonishment was the first link, and we shall find the others fit to it."

"Is he one belonging to the estate; and are you keeping him because he has run away?"

"He certainly belongs to the Lenterne estate. But it would be lucky for him if running away was all he needed punishment for."

"I should like to see him to talk with him; not, however, in connection with your affair. He is curiously enough involved in a case I am looking up, and can put me on the track for any needed evidence."

"If there has been any rascality going on around him, you may be sure he is in it. I have no idea of giving him up to justice just yet. The rascal holds some important secrets, and I must worm them out of him."

"I should like to talk with him. Can I go back with you and see him?"

"Certainly, in my presence. If you won't interfere with the other affair, until I am ready."

"You need not fear that. I am less anxious than you concerning it."

"True, and it's extraordinary, extraordinary! I never saw a young man so cool about coming into his father's property."

"And Mr. Adam Sharpe rubbed his thin, pale, tinged hands together as if to warm them, which indeed seemed necessary, judging from their bloodless look.

"If I believed my father to be a good man it would be different," answered I, sadly.

"Humph! and who has said that he was not?" demanded Mr. Sharpe, darting a keen glance into my face.

"The lips are dead and gone," murmured I, half to myself.

"He raised his head, and nodded it so much in the bird fashion that I began again to think of the vulture."

"Humph! I understand, not very extraordinary; I know you mean. Now then, since they're both dead, it's no harm that the right one should get the blame. She told you he was a bad man, but now I'll give you the verdict of his neighbours. They say that Lionel Lenterne was a generous, warm-hearted, brave-spirited young fellow, until, in an evil hour, he married a hard, cold, despotic woman, who had no charity, forbearance, or tenderness in her nature. That she drove him half frantic with her reproaches,

her disagreeable ways, her hard, pitiless bigoted notions. If she sent him from her in disgust, to take refuge in other arms where he found gentleness and affection, was she the one who ought to turn upon him so fiercely? Well, she took her child and all her property, and ran away, covering all trace of her retreat. One would not have thought to see him following, but he did. He had a yearning tenderness for the baby. Hugh was its name."

"He paused, the cold, icy eye marking well the tremor of my lip and the rush of tears which came into my eyes.

"He searched long and diligently, but she was a crafty woman. She kept her secret well, and he came back again, sad and somewhat reckless, I admit. Poor fellow! it's certain his friends did not blame him, when he obtained the only comfort for himself that he could. He was thrown out of his carriage and killed instantly, five years and three months ago."

"Five years ago! It was five years ago last January that my mother died!" I faltered.

"And he was killed on the fifth of March. He did not survive her long, it seems. Well, about your proofs?"

"I can send for them, and be most likely to receive them in a week's time. Now, if you have no objection, I will go with you to see this Gaspard. He can clear up many doubtful suspicions if he chooses."

"He is close-mouthed when he takes the notion," said Mr. Sharpe. "I worked at him for an hour this morning, after I got him home, trying to discover that name."

"What name?" asked I, carelessly.

"He started, and looked annoyed as he answered:

"Oh, it is of no consequence, a little affair of my own. And, by the way, you have promised to sell me the claim you hold upon that house."

"The tone was whining and hypocritical. Through it I saw the greedy gloating of some secret money-making play, and I answered, hastily:

"I must know that I am really the heir, besides understanding the circumstances, before I can give any promise whatever."

"He bit his lip nervously.

"I must say, young man, you are not remarkably grateful to me for helping you to a comfortable fortune, which you would never have known about. Extraordinary! humph!"

"If it proves as you say, Mr. Sharpe, I shall endeavour to requite your services, notwithstanding it seems there is a reward set apart for that purpose. But I am a man who does not care to move in the dark in unfamiliar places. If your desire be proved right and honourable, I shall do my best to gratify it," answered I, feeling all the while that I acted and seemed unfriendly and somewhat ungrateful.

"But I could not overcome my secret antipathy nor my impression that Mr. Sharpe was somehow weaving a snare about me.

"He drew his gray eyebrows together in an angry frown, but it vanished in a moment into an oily smile, and he said, with a slight laugh:

"Right, quite right, my young friend. I see that caution is well developed in your case. You wish to be sure of my character, which is quite commendable in so young a man as yourself. There is no hurry about the matter. Only let no one else obtain the house."

"I put on my hat and led the way down. At the door John Marvin touched my sleeve.

"That Rona is watching about like a cat expecting every moment to pounce upon an unwary rat," he whispered.

"Look out for her movements," returned I, in the same tone.

"And I walked away with Mr. Sharpe to the office in the street where we took a coach for the west-end, leaving it at a narrow, obscure street, down which Mr. Sharpe led the way, and I followed.

"At a still dingier house he halted, walking up the steps with the air of one at home, and by means of a door-key passed in without ringing. He marched up two flights of stairs, and preceded to the third, where he met a stout, red-faced man.

"Well, Jones, all right! all safe?" he demanded, eagerly.

"I suppose so, sir. I've kept guard here all the time. He tried to bribe me into letting him out, but I told him I couldn't do it, and that if I were willing it wouldn't help him, for you had the key in your pocket. He was very violent, and was loud in his shoutings, but I haven't got a word out of him since for half an hour and more."

"Sulky, eh? Well, we'll see what we can do with him. This gentleman has a word or two to say to him."

"And Mr. Sharpe looked for the key and applied it to the lock.

"I took care to put him up three flights so that he

shouldn't be jumping out of the window. I'm up to his tricks." He chuckled and flung open the door.

"I don't think I ever saw such a transformation in a face as now came over Adam Sharpe's. A fierce, angry glow kindled in his pale blue eyes, his nose was drawn down till it was more than ever like a beak, his lips drew themselves away from the broken teeth in a savage manner, panting for breath in a way that almost frightened me. His thin, pale, bloodless hands were stretched out as if to grapple with some invisible enemy, and he hissed, rather than spoke:

"Gone! the villain is gone!"

"Yes, there was indubitable proof of that. The cunning Gaspard had made his escape, and the traces of his work explained how."

"There before the mantel-piece was a sorry-looking sight. The bed had been despoiled of its mattress and coverlet, and they were spread upon the floor, littered with the debris of bricks and mortar, which he had thus silently deposited in little heaps. What tool he had worked with was not so plain, but evidently a strong, sharp knife, which he had used dexterously and swiftly, forcing an aperture into the chimney. The window bar had been wrenched off and made into a pick. One could not but respect the fellow's ingenuity and spirit. He had shouted and railed to drown the noise he made in making the first break into the plaster, and he had gone through the chimney on to the roof. He was a powerful, agile fellow. There was no question but he would be able to pass from roof to roof, to swing himself down by waterspout and railing, and thus gain the street. But it was in broad daylight. Someone must have seen him, and if it were only half an hour ago, he might be tracked."

"I stopped Mr. Sharpe in the midst of his volley of curses to suggest this. He seized upon the idea and rushed out. Had anyone in the adjacent houses seen the man? Yes, half a dozen at least. He was a chimney-sweeper, wasn't he? Why, he promised the widow at the end house to come next week and look at her chimney. He talked a short time with her and she gave him a hat, because he had bruised his so it wasn't fit to be seen."

"Mr. Sharpe bit his lip as he listened.

"I'll have him yet," he said. "I'll hesitate no longer about putting the police on his track."

"What crime can you charge him with?" asked I, half inclined to be pleased that the poor fellow had escaped.

"Why, haven't I told you? With murder—the murder of Major James Lenterne."

"Good heavens! Major Lenterne!"

"Yes, Major Lenterne. Your father's nephew. He came to take possession of the property, asserting that no other heirs had any other claims, if they were found. And he was murdered at Mossy Glen on the second day of his arrival. The crime roused the whole country, and a heavy reward was offered. But it was one of the most mysterious cases ever known. For five years I have now and then been on his track, but always lost it. And to think he has escaped now! But I will ferret him out. He can't get out of the town in this time, and I mustn't stop to talk. I'll go this moment to the police-office!"

"He left me there, and I returned like one in a dream to the Thorpe mansion."

(To be continued.)

CAPTURE OF AN EXTRAORDINARILY LARGE SALMON.—The largest salmon ever taken within the memory of man on a British river by rod and fly was captured by Captain Tinkler, in Tweed, a short way above Coldstream, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cornhill. In point of magnitude and weight it throws into the shade every fish on record secured by the angler, and eclipses any specimen that overcame under our personal observation on the fishmonger's stall. It turned the scales, after being freely bled, at 51 lb. In length it measured 4 ft. 3 in. from the tip of the snout to the centre of the tail. Its girth was fully 29½ in.—a trifle more. The length of the head, from the snout to the extremity of the gill-cover, stood at 12 in., the breadth of tail at the fan 14 in., the dorsal fin measuring 5 in. in length and 5½ in. in breadth.

It may not be generally known that there lives at Whiting Bay, Island of Arran, a centenarian who was a companion of Robert Burns. His name is Ebenezer Baillie; he is a native of Dalrymple, near Ayr. He was born 7th May, 1767, thus making him 100 years and five months old. When a boy he was at school and slept in the same bed with the poet; his brother, a tailor, also made clothes for him, and the two amused themselves writing verses together. Ebenezer came to Arran 80 years ago as a weaver, but farmed a little, and in summer employed himself at the herring fishing. He worked at weaving till he was 90 years of age. For the last six years

he has mostly been confined to bed, but the other day he was sufficiently well to sit on a chair and have his likeness taken by a photographer. His faculties, we are told, are all sound; and as he is intelligent and has a correct memory, he can talk freely of events which happened 90 years ago. He has a large and well-built head, has been a temperately living man, and, notwithstanding his great age, has the appearance of living for some years yet.

A MENDICANT living alone in a wretched hut at Courbovois, near Paris, in the midst of the most abject misery and intolerable privations, was lately found dead on the floor of his filthy hovel, through an aperture in which he would occasionally protrude his arm to receive the food charitably offered to him by some neighbours who commiserated his forlorn condition. A medical examination proved that the man had died of starvation. A sum of 80*l.* in copper coin having been accidentally found in this abode of human misery, a farther search was made, and immediately under the roof was discovered, carefully wrapped up in many folds of dirty rags, no less than 18,000*fr.* in gold (720*l.*)

MONSTER EEL.—An eel of immense size was lately shown at Mr. Culling's, fishmonger, of Downham Market, which was taken out of the river Ouse, near Denver sluice. It measured in length 5 ft. 8 in., and girth 17½ in., and weighed 36 lb. (28 lb. after being cleaned). Yarrell, in his "British Fishes," mentions having seen the skins of two at Cambridge which together weighed 50 lb. (one 27 lb. and the other 23 lb.), which were taken within a few miles of the spot where this was captured. The party who secured it left for Cambridge with their prize, and obtained at Ely upwards of 3*l.* by showing it. Ely is said to have obtained its name from rents in the isle being paid in eels. The lords of the manors in the isle were annually entitled to upwards of 100,000 eels—not, we presume, of this size.

SCIENCE.

A NEW TELESCOPE.—A new telescope for examining objects situated under water was recently tested on one of the French canals. Reports affirm that pencil marks could be clearly distinguished at a depth of more than five feet. Its practical application will be the examination of the hulls of vessels without its being necessary to dock them.

THE EYE OF THE FLY.—Luenhek having prepared the eye of a fly for microscopic examination, placed it at a greater distance from his microscope than when he would examine an object so as to leave a proper focal distance between it and the lens of his microscope, and then looked through both in the manner of a telescope, at a steeple of a church, which was 299 ft. high and 750 ft. distant, and could plainly see through every little lens the whole steeple inverted, though not larger than the point of a thin needle. Such an exquisite piece of mechanism transcends all human comprehension. So complete, so delicate and beautiful an organ—what an infinite combination of distinct and independent elements must be effected ere the given result shall be obtained; and if we multiply these combinations and adaptations necessary for the production of a single organ, how can we compute the infinity of such combinations needed to perfect an entire animal system? But, above all, if we compute the vast number of distinct species of animal existence, each having an organization peculiar to itself, and exactly adapted to its various necessities and modes of existence, and if we regard the minuteness of some of the animated beings imperceptible to the unaided vision, but each having a frame beautifully articulated, we are absolutely lost in wonder and admiration at the power and intelligence that could thus design and arrange the organs of all the tribes of animated nature.

PETROLEUM FUEL.—The use of mineral oil as a fuel for marine engines has attracted much attention within the last few years. Last year a steam yacht, the property of Mr. Arthur Barff, was fitted with an apparatus, patented by himself, for burning the oil fuel, and various experiments were made on board. Since then she has had a boiler constructed better suited to develop the advantages of liquid fuel, and is now perfected, and with her tanks full of oil carries four times the number of hours' consumption of fuel as when using coal, and works most satisfactorily. The arrangements for feeding the fires are very simple and self-acting. The process is clean and inexpensive, and can be applied to any ordinary marine boiler in a couple of days. The Minnie is the first vessel ever driven with oil fuel, and has been submitted to the inspection of the engineer department at Woolwich Dockyard. The fires are perfectly

under control, can be regulated by a tap, and put out in a second. They require no attention after once lighted. The quantity of oil used is about three gallons per hour for a 10-horse boiler, giving a pressure of 45 lb. of steam, and a speed of 9½ knots. The many advantages which mineral oil possesses as a fuel render the success attained in this little vessel very important. The yachtmen owning steamers will be able to get rid of the intolerable nuisance of coaling and stoking and smoke. The new boiler and fittings have been made and put into the vessel at the Erith Ironworks, by Messrs. Easton, Amos & Anderson.

DO METALS GROW?

It is supposed by some that the metals were formed or deposited in some past age of the world by the agency of either heat or water, during some great convulsions of nature such as have not been witnessed in the period embraced by written history or tradition. There are reasons for doubting the reliability of this opinion. That various mineral substances are now in process of formation or development is certain. For instance, the formation of stone is as apparent as its disintegration. On the beach at Lynn may be seen a conglomerate of clay and siliceous sand impregnated with ferrous oxide, in all stages, from the separated particles to the layers of hardened rock. These rocks are merely the particles of sand, cohered and agglutinated, by means of the clay and the oxide of iron, the salt water acting as a solvent of the softer particles and the sun's rays compacting and baking all together in one mass. So, also, we know that coal is being formed from peat. The intermediate stage is lignite or "brown coal," which in turn becomes coal.

It is morally certain that gold, silver, copper, and some other metals are now in process of formation or deposition. Abandoned silver mines in Peru have been found rich in arborescent deposits of the metal on the walls of galleries unused for many years. A gold-bearing region, after having been cleaned of the precious metal gives good results after the lapse of only a few years. So with copper. In the Siberian mines not only the precious carbonate known as malachite, but the metal itself, in a state of almost absolute purity, is deposited on the walls, roofs, and floors of galleries run under the earth's surface. In some places it appears in masses, and in others as tree-like formations, with trunk and branches similar to a delicate moss.

What becomes of all the gold and silver unavoidably wasted in the process of manufacture and the wear of transmission from hand to hand as currency? It is well known that with all the care exercised in the manufacture of these precious metals, and notwithstanding their specific gravity, an appreciable portion of them is utterly wasted; at least so distributed as to be incapable of being collected and used again. Is it annihilated? The teachings of science prove this to be impossible. Nothing is ever wasted. If the particles are thrown into the atmosphere, they must in time seek the earth's surface. Are they attracted by some unknown power to certain localities? and if not, why should not the streets of a busy city become in time deposits of the precious metals?

Perhaps, after all, the old alchemists had an inspiration of what may yet become *us fait accompli*. When we understand the wonderful processes of nature's laboratory we may possibly intimate her and grow our own metals as we now do our own vegetables; or we may find the philosopher's stone, and actually collect the particles of metals, if we cannot transmute a base mineral into one of the precious metals.

TESTING THE SOUNDNESS OF FORGINGS BY ELECTRIC CURRENTS.—Experiments have lately been carried out at Chatham Dockyard under the superintendence of Mr. S. M. Saxby, in the presence of the officials of the establishment, for the purpose of testing the qualities of the various descriptions of armour-plating and angle and other sorts of iron sent into the establishment, by means of galvanism and magnetic currents, on the recommendation of Professor Airey, the Astronomer Royal. The importance of obtaining more reliable and accurate tests for the various qualities of iron than those hitherto in use has long been felt by the officials employed in this particular duty. Hitherto there has been no test for the condition of a forging beyond mere visual examination, and hence a mass of iron may contain damaging internal flaws which altogether escape detection. Mr. Saxby, however, the inventor of the new principle of testing iron, professes to be able infallibly to discover the least flaw in any description of iron by electrical agency. The experiments have been made on some of the thickest and largest of the armour plates at the dockyard, when, by means of the magnetic current, the exact quality of the iron was, it is stated, ascertained. Experiments have also been made upon a bar of iron

into which a plug of steel has been welded, when the results were considered perfectly satisfactory. A 40-pounder Armstrong gun was also tested by Mr. Saxby, who in a few seconds discovered a defect in the welding of the coil, although invisible to the eye, but afterwards proved to exist. Farther trials have been made on large guns and rifle barrels, with equally satisfactory results, and the experiments will be continued.

THE AIR OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY.—The inquest on the body of the young woman who died suddenly while travelling on the Underground Railway has resulted in a verdict of death from natural causes. The evidence of the scientific witnesses was conclusive as to the innocuous character of the atmosphere of the railway. Two independent analyses were made, and both agreed in the opinion that there were no impure gases which existed in sufficient quantities to affect the health even of passengers who were in a diseased condition of body.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HOW TO TEST THE PURITY OF QUININE.—In these days of pharmaceutical adulteration a reliable test for the purity of a drug is of the utmost value. The method, therefore, which M. Stoddart recommends for the detection of quinine when mixed with quinine, may be of interest to our readers. Six grammes of the suspected quinine are dissolved in a test-tube in five grammes of sulphuric acid, diluted with three grammes water; to this are added 7-5 grammes ether, 18 grammes alcohol, and two grammes of a solution of sodic hydrate containing about eight percent. The mixture is well shaken, and left to itself for twelve hours. If quinine, cinchonine, or cinchonidine are present, they will be found in a layer below the ether—quinidine as an oily liquid, cinchonidine in crystals. The second method consists of a microscopic examination of the crystalline precipitate produced in a saturated and neutral solution of quinine sulphate by potassic sulphocyanide.

GAPS.

ONLY go on, and the way will show itself before you. It is astonishing how every difficulty vanishes as you get near it. Hills at a distance look gigantic; approach, and where are they? You have gradually put them under your feet. Courage and enterprise conquer all things; and there's always one good in the atmosphere about a difficulty, the rarified air exhilarates and helps you to overcome.

As it is in the rambling rides we take so it is in life. However closely pounded in field, or hidden in copse, there's always a practicable gap to be crept through, or an easy hindrance to be got over, or somehow or other a way out. Nothing but a cowardly stagnation ever fails utterly. If you do not win what you meant straightforwardly, you attain to something sideways. It is mighty seldom, though the path of life be hedged with thorns awhile, that Providence has not left a gap, "a way to escape that you may be able to bear it."

BELL-RINGING EXTRAORDINARY.—Church bells have served strange purposes in their time. They have been rung to drive away thunderstorms, and tolled to keep grasping demons at a respectful distance from the parting souls of such as have had money enough to pay for the privilege; but among all the uses to which they have been put in times past, we cannot think of one to compare in grotesqueness with a recent invention of the good people of East Peckham, in Kent. A Mr. Wyman opened a beerhouse there recently, and the church bells were rung in celebration of the event. The vicar, as soon as he found out what was going on, rushed down to the church in a state of horror, and put a summary end to the impious proceeding.

BULL FIGHTS.—The press of Madrid has for some time past been publishing articles against bull-fighting, and in their attacks on the sport have given some curious statistics. The number of bull-fights has of late considerably increased, and it is calculated that in a single year, 1861, as many as 1,990 of those animals were thus sacrificed. The value of each being estimated at 2,500 reals, the loss may be set down at 4,975,000 reals. In the same year 3,000 horses, worth 600,000 reals, are supposed to have perished. The losses in 1866 were still greater, and consisted of 2,375 bulls and 3,561 horses, representing a total value of about 7,800,000 reals. The money paid for admission to the 475 bull-fights which took place last year amounted to 13 millions of reals, so that the total cost of that amusement to the country for the year was not less than a million of piastres, or five millions of francs.



[THE NEW REREDOS AND ALTAR TABLE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.]

THE RESTORATIONS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

EVERY incident connected with the glorious old Abbey at Westminster, so fraught as it is with historical memories, must be of the greatest interest to all Englishmen; thus it is that the restorations and additions that have of late been in progress have been watched most anxiously. These restorations consist of a new reredos or altar screen, an altar table, the sedilla or seats for the officiating ministers, and the tessellated pavement surrounding the altar.

No portion of the Abbey has perhaps undergone from time to time more alterations than has this. As far as can be judged from the remains, the ancient reredos must have been immensely rich and gorgeous, and appears from the heraldic devices upon it to have been constructed about the time of Edward IV. In the reign of Queen Anne respect for mediæval art does not appear to have been a very common quality, for the magnificent old altar piece was fearfully defaced and broken about to make room for a marble one, originally intended for Whitehall Chapel. Nothing could have been in worst taste, or more out of keeping with the other architecture of the edifice; and when in 1824 the Gothic style of art again prevailed, this "classic" altar was removed. It was not an easy task, however, to restore the old screen, but every effort was made to trace out the original design, and the talents of the celebrated Bernasconi, the celebrated Italian modeller, were called into requisition to reproduce it in his artificial stone. All his skill was, however, lost when, after he had completed the work, a sham stone altar with a black marble top and a monument composed of brick, cement, and tar-rope, in memory of the traditional founder of the Abbey, King Sebert, were erected.

That such mean and artificial materials should have been employed in a work of national interest in the most conspicuous and sacred portion of the ancient cathedral, was a disgrace to our countrymen, and so of late years it has been felt, and at last it was determined that a work creditable to the country should be commenced.

To the Rev. Lord John Thynne is due the credit of originating the present restorations. It was resolved to reproduce the work of Bernasconi in alabaster and marble, subject to any modifications which might render the new reredos a more exact copy of the ancient design. In the central recess of the reredos it was decided to place a mosaic picture of "The Last Supper," the size of which, as well as of the

altar table, was determined by the old central canopies of Bernasconi and by the remains of an ancient retabulum which is still preserved under glass in the Abbey. It was, however, discovered, after the mosaic was prepared, that these canopies were not originally attached to this part of the reredos; so their restoration was abandoned, and the mosaic set between two necessarily disproportionate borders. The whole design suffers in consequence.

The picture was designed and drawn by Messrs. Clayton & Bell, and was reproduced in mosaic by Dr. Salviati, of Venice. It is a pleasure to observe the reintroduction, after a lapse of about six centuries, of these beautiful enamel mosaics of Italian manufacture.

The added space is filled up with a retabulum, consisting, in the lower part, of mosaic medallions in relief, very similar in design to the old retabulum, and in the upper part of canopies in metal-work and enamel. The rich material of which the retabulum is composed helps to give unity to the central recess. Although the central canopies are suppressed, there are four similar lateral ones (corresponding with those on the other side of the screen), which, for extreme delicacy and elaborateness of execution, are probably the most remarkable pieces of workmanship of the day. The cornice of the screen was found, when opened out in 1824, to have contained a series of sculptured, though unintelligible, subjects, united by a swinging label with escutcheons, similar in arrangement to the series illustrating the life of Edward the Confessor on the other side. These have been replaced by a series of fourteen principal subjects from the life of our Lord, carved by Mr. H. H. Armistead most excellently.

The sham stone altar has been removed, and the new altar table is composed of pencil cedar exquisitely inlaid with other woods, the front and sides being richly ornamented with Scriptural subjects in relief, and the old marble slab has been worked into the top.

The monument of King Sebert has shared the fate of the old altar, and the stone bench of the sedilla found enclosed within it has been restored. The tessellated pavement on which the altar stands is now placed back into its original position, so as to admit of the restoration of that part of the old marble mosaic floor which was previously hidden by it. The cost of these works is defrayed from a fund appropriated to decorative purposes under the special direction of the Rev. Lord John Thynne.

Although undoubtedly, as we have indicated, there are still faults in portions of the new work, these are more the result of accident than a want of care.

Taken as a whole it is most exquisite, and is an ornament to the grand old Abbey, while it is in the highest degree creditable to Mr. Gilbert Scott, R.A., the architect.

As might naturally be expected during the progress of the work, some exceedingly interesting antiquarian discoveries were made. Among them were the bases of two of the piers of Edward the Confessor's work, now marked by and visible through two trap-doors made in the floor of the sanctuary.

THREE skeletons have been discovered near Dorchester while lowering a hill. One of the skeletons is seven feet in length. They were found about three feet below the surface.

DEATH OF "PETER PARLEY."—Woodbridge has lost one of its notabilities in the person of Mr. William Martin, better known as "Peter Parley." Mr. Martin had been failing in health for several months past, and recently died at his residence, Holly Lodge, Woodbridge, about four o'clock in the morning. There have been two or three claimants for the title of "Peter Parley," but, without entering upon the question of priority, it is sufficient for us to state that Mr. Martin carried on "Peter Parley's Annual" for twenty-six years.

THE LAW OF THE SALE OF BREAD.—The sale of bread out of the City of London and beyond the bills of mortality, and ten miles from the Royal Exchange, is regulated by 6 & 7 Wm. IV., cap. 37. Bakers may make and sell bread of any weight or size, but all bread must be sold by weight (avoirdupois) except French or fancy bread or rolls. It has recently been decided that "cottage" bread is not French or fancy bread. The quarter loaf should therefore weigh 4 lb. avoirdupois. The penalty under the Act is 40s. for each offence on conviction before the magistrates. Bakers are to provide in their shops scales and weights, and when bread is delivered by cart or carriage, every cart or carriage is to carry scales and weights for the purpose, as the Act well says, that the bread may be from "time to time weighed in the presence of the purchaser."

MILK IN FRANCE.—In France milk is packed in small tins, easily moved by one man, and by a simple contrivance the stopper screw down upon the contents of each tin, so that the motion of the railway cannot churn the milk *in transitu*. The tins are then placed in covered wagons, and in summer are wrapped in cloths, which are watered from time to time, so as to promote coolness by evaporation. The result of this care, which costs but little, is that

the milk supply of Paris is proverbially excellent. Then, in Paris, a vigilant police supervision provides that the measures in which the article is retailed shall be fair and exact, and that it shall not be adulterated; in London "the cow with the iron tail" predominates unmolested in every dairy.

THE DUCHESS VISCONTI.

CHAPTER I.

"STRIKE for the Guelphs!" "Strike for the Ghibellines!"

Those two war-cries spread terror in Southern Europe for ages. From a mere family feud difficulties multiplied and grew in political consequence until nations became involved in the strife.

At the opening of the fourteenth century the chief cities of Lombardy were under the sway of the Guelphs; but the Ghibellines were not entirely overcome. They rested upon their arms, and awaited the turn in the great political wheel which should bring them uppermost again.

In Milan, that "beautiful city standing in a sea of green trees," the Duke Francesco Della Torre was Podesta, and he held rule with an iron hand. Even his Guelphic friends stood in fear of his wrath, for he had reached the chief magistracy through blood and outrage, and his heart had become seared and hardened.

Equal in social rank and political importance with the Torriani were the Visconti, a family attached to the interest of the house of Hohenstaufen, or Ghibellina. Francesco Della Torre would have put the chief of the Visconti to death upon assuming the reigns of government had he dared; but Lorenzo Visconti, the hereditary prince, or duke, of the family, was so well beloved by the Milanese that he dared not do it, and perhaps this very fact may properly account for much of the bitterness and tyranny of his rule.

Lorenzo Visconti, at the age of five-and-fifty, was so worn and shattered that life had few joys left for him. He had once been proud and happy, had once ruled in Milan, and had been loved and honoured by those over whom he held sway. In past years he had been stout of frame, and of grand and imposing mien, and few there were who could have stood before him in a trial of physical prowess. With the boon of robust health to sweeten and give zest to his pleasures, he had loved life for the many blessings that came with it.

But now all was changed. Another ruled in Milan, and an old wound, received in battle, was slowly, but surely, eating his life away. But that was not all. There was something more than physical pain—something more than temporal loss of political power—that gave him so much unrest.

"My lord, you seem more sad and downcast than usual to-day. Oh, if I could help you, how gladly would I devote myself to the work."

It was his wife, the fair Lady Lavinia, who spoke. She was younger than the duke, being now not more than forty; and, but for the few lines of care and anxiety which sympathy for her suffering husband had drawn upon her brow, she was as beautiful as when, just entering upon the stage of womanhood, Visconti had led her to the altar. And she was as good and true as she was beautiful.

Much of what the duke had found of joy in life he owed to his noble wife; for, in adversity, as in prosperity, she shared his fortunes with smiles and cheerful words, feeling that her chief office as wife was to render her husband happy if possible.

The duke had been lying upon a soft Tyrian couch, but he had arisen and sat up as his wife approached and took a seat by his side; and when she spoke a faint smile broke over his sunken features.

"Hush, my good Lavinia. You would borrow needless trouble. Surely my face cannot show what I do not feel. If it does, then let me assure you that I am not more sad than usual. But, my wife, you are more downcast than is your wont, and there is sign of troubled thought upon your brow."

The duchess smiled faintly, and would have denied the charge had she not feared that her very words would betray her.

"Yes, yes, Lavinia," continued Visconti, struck by his wife's silence, "it is you who are more deeply depressed than usual; and I can see that there is something more than the passing moment upon your mind. Fear not to speak, my love. If there be any new plot brewing against me, fear not to tell me the truth; for I do assure you that I am too well used to ill news to be seriously affected thereby now. So speak freely. Tell me what has happened. Has the Podesta—"

"No, no, my lord," interrupted the duchess; "it is nothing of that."

"Ah! then it is something," cried the duke, quickly. "Oh, ho, you have confessed; so now I demand an explanation. Come—I am all attention. Let me be the recipient of your thoughts; for I know full well that you have that upon your mind which must be thrown off ere you can peacefully rest."

"Alas! my good, kind lord, little rest can I find while you are suffering."

"But you may find less of unrest," retorted the duke, with a smile; "so my warning still has virtue. Come, my love, I would hear your speech, for I am assured that you bear upon your mind a burden of which you are anxious to be free. Surely you fear not to trust me."

"Indeed, my lord, on all the earth there is not another in whose love my trust has such firm and abiding hold."

She pressed her hand upon her brow for a few short moments, and then, looking up with a serious expression, she continued:

"I have that upon my mind which has given me much unrest, and I have come to you at this time for the purpose of speaking freely and frankly. You will pardon me."

"Go on, my love, and be assured that you are pardoned in advance for all that you can say or do."

"Then, my lord, I would have you tell me truly: Are you not sad and unhappy because you have no heir to inherit your name and estates? Does not the thought oppress you that with this line of the noble house of Visconti fades away from the pages of history?"

The duke was deeply moved, and for some moments he gazed into his wife's face with a vacant stare, as though his reason had been suddenly suspended. But finally he heaved a deep sigh, and, placing his hand upon the arm of the duchess, and looking eagerly into her face, he said:

"Lavinia, why have you asked me this?"

"Because," she steadily answered, "I would know what it is that so seriously affects your mind. I have seen of late that your heart has been aching, for your oft-repeated sighs and moans are sure signs of some inward distress."

"And," pursued the duke, with a smile that was really painful, "if I should confess that the cause thereof was as you have suggested, how could it benefit you to know?"

"It would remove the deep anxiety which I experience in my ignorance," replied the lady. "And, furthermore, my sympathy might be something. Oh, my lord, the heart of a true wife must ever be the seat of painful anxiety when she sees her husband moved to grief by a cause which she cannot discover."

The duke reached forth and took a staff of sandalwood, which stood near the head of his couch; and, thus supporting his steps, he walked slowly to and fro across the apartment, stopping finally by a window which overlooked the blooming garden, where he meditated for some time. When he returned to his seat his face had assumed a clearer expression, and he seemed stronger and better.

"Lavinia," he said, with a perceptible tremulousness in his voice as he commenced, but which disappeared as he progressed and became earnest, "since you have broached this matter, I am going to speak freely, and I shall tell you something that may surprise you. The time has come in which I can speak with only the fear of the effect which may be produced upon yourself. You asked me to forgive you ere you spoke; and now I must crave the same boon at your hands."

"Speak on, my lord."

"But, my wife, you little think what I shall tell you."

"I care not what it be, so that you wholly unburden your heart. Were it even of murder most dire, I should know that there must have been—"

"Hush, Lavinia. No cold, unnatural crime ever stained the soul of him you call husband. If I have, in the years that are gone, done that which had better have been left undone, believe me, the deed was the result of such impulse as the heaven which made us gives to every human being with a warm and generous heart. But listen—listen, my wife, and you shall know all. You shall be no longer ignorant of that which rests like a thing of torture upon my conscience. And, further, I have not kept this from you intending that you should be always ignorant. I had planned that I would at some time reveal to you the secret; but, whenever I have thought of so doing, my coward heart has shrunk from the ordeal, and the story has remained untold. But it shall be so no more. Be calm, Lavinia, and remember that he who speaks loves you with all his heart, and that you have his entire confidence and esteem."

The duchess was too deeply moved to speak, but she gave unmistakable token of assent to her husband's desire, and presently the duke commenced:

"Lavinia, your judgment has not led you astray,

and yet it has led you but a short way towards a knowledge of all that troubles me. The reflection that I might be the last of our noble and once powerful house has given me much pain and unrest. Francesco Della Torre sees me failing day by day, and he feels that in my weakness he is secure. Had I a son to bear my name and to wear the sword of honour, the Torriani would not feel so secure in their places of power. Even now Francesco is shaken in his seat, and the time is not far distant when the people will demand a change. Ah, there is a cloud gathering about his head which he cannot see. The star of the house of Hohenstaufen is not to remain obscured for ever. It will arise, and the Guelph shall be shaken from power as the autumn leaves are driven when the chill blast sweeps down from the Alps. Francesco Della Torre does not possess the confidence of the people, and I think he begins to discover it. But," pursued the duke, his tone changing from the height of zealous pride, "what matters it to me? Should the Milanese demand a Ghibelline ruler, a Visconti cannot sit in the Podesta's chair."

Lorenzo stopped, and gazed into his wife's face.

"My lord," she said, when she had waited a long time in silence, "you have more to tell me."

"Yes, my love," replied the duke, "for I have as yet told you nothing. Listen to me. It is now thirty years since the step was taken of which I shall tell you. Among the retainers of my father was an armorer named Donsettli. He was a stout, brave man, and as good a soldier as he was an artisan. As he had charge of all the arms in the palace, of course he came and went when he pleased, and I saw much of him. In time he offered to give me lessons in fencing, which offer I gladly accepted. His forge was at his own house; and, as I had a curiosity to see him work at some of that marvellous mail which came from his hands, I went with him to his dwelling, and there I saw his daughter. She was named Irene, and I thought then that she was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen."

"I saw her again, and again, and in time my love for her began to be a passion that was consuming me. Unfortunately for us both, she loved me as fondly as I loved her; and, when I spoke to her of a secret marriage, she was led by her love to give quick consent. I told her that at some future time our marriage should be made public, and that she should be acknowledged before the world as my wife, and I spoke honestly; but I did not know what unhappy necessities political circumstances were to impose upon me."

"We were married, and for a time we were both dwellers in a very heaven of bliss. When the ceremony had been performed we had to let Irene's parents know of it. They were filled with alarm, but they did not endeavour to separate us. My promise that I would at some future time acknowledge my wife before the world satisfied the mother; and if it did not entirely satisfy the father, he had full faith in my honest intent, and he suffered us to be together as often as I could find opportunity; for I was forced to be very careful lest the truth should reach my father's ears."

"At the expiration of five years, during which time I had been as happy as man could be, my father approached me upon the subject of marriage with the daughter of John of Mantua. For a time I refused to listen; but I was not long in discovering that I must either comply, or give some good and sufficient reason for refusing. The Prince of Mantua was ill nigh unto death, and it was of the most vital importance that the two houses should be united. But how could I take another wife while my hand and my heart were Irene's? Her father had been slain in battle with the Guelphs in Pavia, and her mother was an invalid, and to me alone could she look for succour and support. I might have held her there in secret, and have made the Princess of Mantua my wife; but a crime so black would have killed me with shame and remorse."

"In just five years and two months from the date of our marriage Irene became a mother. A son was born unto us, and I should have been very happy then had not the mother grown suddenly ill. I had almost made up my mind to take my wife and child, and flee from Milan for ever, when Irene closed her eyes in that sleep that knows no earthly awakening! And in a very few weeks thereafter her mother followed her to the grave."

"Under plea of sickness I gained permission of my father to be absent from Milan for a month. He really believed me ill, and, thinking that a change of scene and climate might be beneficial, he gave ready consent. Before leaving, however, it was necessary that I should make some provision for my child, and I carried it to the hospital, and gave it in charge to the porter, with the request that it should be carefully numbered and registered, and held subject to further orders."

"The old friar knew me, and promised that my request should be complied with. But I have since learned that my precautions were all unnecessary, as every infant left there is faithfully numbered and registered, and religiously cared for until it reaches the age of six years; and then, if no provision has been made for other disposition, the child is given to whoever will take it and give satisfactory evidence that they are worthy of the charge.

"I went away, and was gone nearly two months, and during my absence, being able to think and reason, I saw that my father was right regarding the union of our house with that of the Hohenstauffen branch of Mantua. And I can tell you one other thing. It may appear strange to you, but it is nevertheless true. I wanted something to love, and something that could love me in return. There was a void in my heart that only love could fill; and I said to myself, if the Princess of Mantua can love me—if she can draw my head upon her bosom, and hold me there in the embrace of warm, devoted love, I may be happier so than to be alone.

"I returned to Milan, and I went with my father to Mantua. I saw the princess, and I think that my look of melancholy must have aroused her sympathies; for she was very kind to me, and ere long I began to love her with all my heart.

"Lavinia, I have heard it often said that the heart can never have a second love like the first. I know not how it may be with others, but for myself I know that never did my poor heart cry aloud for love as it did in its hours of desolation; and never was a more blessed boon bestowed upon me than when first you rested your head upon my bosom, and told me that you loved me.

"Oh, no, no, no! There is no truth in the assertion that the human heart can truly love but once. The heart that can love but once is only a heart of weak, transitory passion, entirely consuming itself in the smouldering embers of its dead love. The heart of the truly faithful man—or of him who loves with honest fervour and soul-born devotion—cannot remain long isolated from the realm of love. It cannot live if the warm sunshine of love be shut for ever away from it.

"My wife—my own, blessed wife—I leave it for you to say—Have I not loved you with all the love you could ask?"

The duchess rested her head upon her husband's bosom, and burst into tears.

"Oh, my own dear husband," she cried, clinging closely to him, "you have been all in all to me!"

"And you will love me none the less for what I have told you?"

"No, no, no! That were impossible. I will try and love you better hereafter; for now I know your heart. I know that you are all my own to love, and what more could I ask?"

"And now," spoke the duke, when they had both become calm, "I must tell you of my child. I have no excuse to offer for my conduct. I can only say that I did as I thought best. When I returned from my visit abroad, and before my marriage with you, I went to the hospital, and placed in the hands of Father Oswald, the porter and general superintendent of the affairs of the male children, two hundred sequins, and this sum he promised should be devoted to the maintenance of the child. From that time to the present I have known nothing of the boy; but now, Lavinia, the thought has occurred to me—aye, has been with me night and day for months—suppose my boy was grown up to be a true and honourable man—Can you not guess the rest?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And what think you?"

"I think, by the laws of Milan, the right of primogeniture would attach to that child if you could find him."

"I know it would, Lavinia," said the duke, earnestly. "I am satisfied upon that point; for, to please the parents of Irene—aye, and to do an act in accordance with my own sense of honour—a record of my marriage was made in the church of Saint Ambrogio. The question with me is, shall I venture upon the search?"

The duchess knew that her husband would be governed by her advice, so she took time for thought. She arose and walked towards the window, and the duke, who knew the direction of her meditations, waited patiently for the result. At length the lady returned, and resumed her seat; and when she spoke her voice had that firmness which gives token of calm decision.

"My lord, find your son; if he be an honourable man I will take him into my confidence and esteem as though he were of my own blood."

"Think well, Lavinia," said the duke, evidently much pleased by his wife's decision, but yet anxious that she should not forget herself in her desire to serve him. "Remember that mighty results may

flow from your decision; and, furthermore, that the story of my early marriage must be made public."

"I have thought of all that, my lord; and I say, let the search be made. The house of Visconti may yet be raised again to power in Milan."

CHAPTER II.

UPON one of the best paved and most frequented terraces running parallel with and close by the grand canal, stood the shop of an artizan who was noted throughout that section of the town not only for the results of his curious and cunning workmanship, but for the marvellous manner in which he could use the instruments of his own manufacture.

His was a double trade. By profession he had been reared an armourer, and some of the finest weapons of steel for which Milan has been so justly celebrated came from his forge; but he had, from some source, inherited a fondness and a delicate taste for music, and of late he had devoted most of his time to the manufacture of musical instruments.

According to his own story, his father, who had occupied the shop before him, but who was now disabled by paralysis, had made several important improvements in the harp—improvements which had made his name famous. When people spoke of Nicolas Bellani it was to praise his new harp, because other people made as good swords and daggers, and as good armour, as he did, and there was no improvement of which he could conceive; but it was different with musical instruments. Improvement in these was not only possible, but much needed.

When Matteo Bellani, the son, came to take the shop, upon the sad disability of his parent, he said to himself, "If my father made improvements, so can I." And he had this advantage over his father, he was himself a natural musician, with one of the finest voices in Milan, and acknowledged one of the most accomplished harpists. Matteo's first improvement was to set the harp in a frame, and fashion it into something like a spinet. But this did not satisfy him; and before he was five-and-twenty years of age he had not only put his harp into another frame, but he had fixed that frame into a handsome case, with an arrangement of keys, jacks, and plectrums, so that he could command the whole power and capacity of the instrument with ease. In short, he had produced a good harpsichord, and not only did some of the first families in Milan order his instruments, but they called upon him to give lessons thereon.

The Podesta Della Torre was one of the first to demand an instrument, and also to call for his services as a teacher. And ere long the Duchess Visconti had an instrument made and placed in the palace at the Piazza di Castello; and this contained an important improvement, consisting of an arrangement of stops by means of which the volume of tone could be regulated; and Matteo was engaged to come to the palace and give lessons to a niece of the duchess, who had been consigned to the guardianship of the duke by Charles of Mantua.

Matteo Bellani was five-and-twenty years of age, and no man in Milan was more envied than he was. Nature had done much for him—had given to him a form of surpassing comeliness and grace; had endowed him with a muscular power and energy which enabled him to surprise his friends by feats of personal prowess; and it had also blessed him with a face which was in itself a fit mirror of the generous and loving soul that animated the man. And what nature had thus so kindly begun had been fittingly completed and adorned by a virtuous education. To his invalid father he was an angel of blessing, and to his friends everywhere he was a treasure of entertainment and good nature, while to the poor and needy he was a messenger of mercy and consolation.

No wonder that Matteo Bellani was courted and flattered by those who dwelt in raptures upon the marvellous music that rolled forth from the touch of his practised fingers, and upon the magic notes of his sweetly tuned voice, and no wonder that he was held in awe and respect by those who judged men by the amount of physical power they could command.

And we should say such a man must be happy. What could he want that might not be his? Aye, what could he want?

See that young man who has just been in to purchase a dagger—a man with no more brains than a dog, and whose dainty step would be materially accelerated by the squeaking of a mouse on a dark night. Why does Matteo gaze after that man with such a look of discontent upon his handsome face? What can he have that the artizan should envy him?

Ah! that man is a marquis, and he has rank—rank! And Matteo Bellani 'arise back into his shop

and bitterly remembers that he is of plebeian birth. And what can he want with rank? We shall see anon.

It was a pleasant day in the first week of June. Most of the pleasure-seekers were upon the Strada di Circovallazione, outside the city wall, or upon the beautiful Corso of the Oriental Gate; but Matteo Bellani had just finished a new harpsichord, and his music drew a great number of the idlers into his shop, while others, who dared not take the liberty to enter, stood around the door listening to the sweet sounds that arose from both voice and instruments.

Among those who had entered the shop, and who appeared to make themselves the most at home, was a young man named Ludovico; and as he is to play an important part in our story, we will give him an introduction.

He was of ordinary height, of good proportions, and his face was fair and comely; only there was a lurking light in his dark eye, and a sinister curl about the lips, that betokened treachery and deceit. It was one of those faces which the casual observer would pronounce handsome; but there was a lack of frankness—a glittering coldness—which might be likened to the beauty of the richly coloured serpent. And yet he could smile, laugh, and be merry; and among his own companions he could make himself agreeable and entertaining.

The soft, silken beard upon his chin was pointed after the fashion of the time, and the moustache was carefully oiled and waxed. His dress was more showy than substantial—silken hose, with trunks of scarlet velvet, a vest of yellow silk, a doublet of velvet, like the trunks, elaborately ornamented with silver lace, while upon his head he wore a low wide-topped cap, or bonnet, of blue velvet, upon one side of which was fixed an imitation ostrich plume. A fine Milan sword hung upon his hip, and upon the left breast of his yellow vest was pinned a rose.

All that was known by his companions of Ludovico's early life was gathered from himself. He said that his father, who had died when he was fifteen, was a merchant of Venice, and that a vast amount of money had been spent upon his education; and he furthermore declared that there was even now a large sum of money lodged with an old Jewish banker in Venice, upon which he could draw to a certain extent every month. The money was all his, he said; but his father, fearing what might be the result of his free-and-easy habits, had, just before he died, placed the chief bulk of his wealth in the hands of this banker, leaving it so that his son could draw the interest when he pleased. But those who knew Ludovico intimately knew this to be false, and knew also that what money he spent he gained by gambling. If he had more, he must have got it by stealing.

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Ludovico as Matteo arose from his harpsichord. "By the mass, brave sir, but you do play superbly."

Matteo's lip curled with scorn, for he knew the man, and he liked not his flattery; and yet he suffered his presence because it was neither his wish nor policy to offend anyone, and more especially one who professed to be a gentleman. Naturally kind-hearted and generous, it was his desire to please all; but his feelings were deep and strong, and for such a man as Ludovico he could feel only contempt, though he suffered his presence as he did the presence of spaniels and hounds that came with their masters.

"A grand performance," pronounced the young Marquis of Monza. "By the life of me, if I could perform like that I'd give all I am worth!"

"Would you give your title?" asked Ludovico.

"Yes—quickly," replied the nobleman, who was really a good sort of fellow.

"Zounds! Matteo," cried Ludovico, turning to our hero, "you cannot do better than make an exchange with the marquis. Just keep one of your canzoni-cinas to please the fair lady with, and your fortune is made."

"I do not understand you, signor," returned Matteo, flushing.

"That is because you will not," retorted the other, with a laugh. "No, no—is there not a fair lady with brown hair and blue eyes, whose hand you would give all to win?"

"Peace, man!" commanded the artizan, somewhat sternly.

"What is it? What is it?" cried two or three in concert.

"It is a certain beautiful lady to whom our friend gives lessons in music," replied Ludovico. "Oh, I know full well his heart is pierced. He cannot deny it. I saw him only the evening before last stand in a certain place, and gaze upon a certain window in a certain building—"

"What place?" broke in the merry ones, who thought as yet only of innocent sport at the expense of a love-stricken swain.

"Ludovico!" pronounced Matteo, authoritatively, "let us have no more of this. I like it not."

"What place?" persisted two of the company.

"The place was so very near to the Piazza di Castello that—"

"Ludovico," exclaimed the artizan, flushing again to the very temples, "you are venturing too far. I have asked you already to be silent. I ask you now once more."

There are men—and the number embraces by far the largest portion of the human family—who, when they once commence a badinage of words, and discover that they have made a mistake, are ashamed to stop for fear their companions will think them timid. The same men chafe exceedingly when met by authority, and know not how to behave themselves when informed of a fault. Ludovico was of this class, and he would not give in. In fact, he became angry when Matteo thus feelingly expressed the desire that he should hold his tongue; and he resolved now that he would disclose the whole matter.

"Liarolo!" he cried. "What a fuss about a small matter! Is it a wonder that a good-looking young man like you, my brave Matteo, should fall in love with so beautiful and fascinating a creature as is our good duke's sweet ward?"

That was touching the artizan in a tender spot, and the hot blood rushed to his face quickly.

"Ludovico," he said, as soon as he could speak calmly, "you have gone too far, and I advise you to stop at once."

"Can you deny the charge?" demanded Ludovico.

"It would be foolish, indeed, for me to deny a charge so openly ridiculous."

"Oh, oh! then you do deny it. Now, by our Lady, I swear that I have seen you stand beneath—"

At this point Matteo advanced and laid his hand upon the speaker's arm. His face had for the moment become pale, and it was plain to be seen that he was deeply moved.

"Ludovico, once more I ask you to hold your tongue. You are not only taking an unwarrantable liberty with my name, but you are making such use of the name of an honourable lady as no gentleman would be guilty of."

"Ha! Do you mean to say that I am not a gentleman?"

"It remains for you to prove whether you be a gentleman or not."

"Sblood! I think you mean that I have forfeited the name. If it be so out with it, and we will find new entertainment for our friends."

Matteo regarded the adventurer a moment in calm disdain, and then, moving back a pace, he pointed to the door.

"You had better leave, signor. There is the way! and it were better for you and for me that you went quietly."

"Now, by heaven!" cried Ludovico, starting back, and moving his hand towards the hilt of his sword, "this is past endurance. 'Sdeath! I can scarcely believe my ears. Ordered from your shop—ordered out like an intruding dog! By heaven! Master Matteo, thou hadst best bethink thyself ere thou repeat the order."

The artizan's blood was roused, but his reply was cool nevertheless, though couched in language that might not have found utterance had his temper been unmoved.

"Signor, your presence here is distasteful to me at best, and I have suffered it rather than courted it. I like you not, and would prefer that your room beneath my roof were occupied by a better man. I would not have spoken this had you not given me cause for anger. The man who trifles with my name in connection with one which is polluted by resting upon his lips—"

At this point Ludovico drew his sword, and stamped his foot upon the floor.

"Enough of that!" he cried. "Until now I did not suspect that you had a willing mistress within the walls of the Visconti palace; but your strange passion convinces me that a name so easily polluted must be—"

Matteo waited to hear no more. With one bound he reached Ludovico's side, and, seizing him by the throat, he threw him towards the door, exclaiming as he did so:

"I like not your words. Are you an idiot to think of crossing blades with me? You should pay with your life for the foul words you have spoken were your tongue often in tune for truths, so that your speech could have weight. So much as breathe another word like that, and I shall have blood upon my hands! There—pollute not this floor again! Out—and remain out!"

As a strong man might have led a child, so had the artizan led Ludovico, and at the door he lifted

him over the threshold, and set him down upon the broad stone outside. Then he closed the door and returned to his shop.

"Gentlemen," he said, when he had rested a few moments from the effects of the powerful excitement that swayed him, "if I have given way to unseemly passion I pray you excuse me. I have more than once hinted to Ludovico that I liked not his company, for there may be those who would be deterred from entering here to purchase my wares while such a man was present."

"In truth, signor, we ought to thank you," volunteered the marquis. "It is known by many that Ludovico is something worse than a gamester. I am sorry to say that I have played with him; but it shall not occur again. He is a bad fellow, and he has a bad name. By the Mass! he should have been marked for that slur upon the fame of our fair Lady of Mantua."

"It is true, gentlemen," proceeded Matteo, "that I have been engaged by the duke to give instruction to his ward; and Ludovico has probably seen me going to and coming from the palace; but he had no right to indulge in badinage which involved the name of such a lady. And, furthermore, such words as might have been pleasantly received from the lips of another come with poison from his lips."

Of those present in the artizan's shop all sympathized with him, for even those few who fancied Ludovico's companionship held Matteo's in higher estimation. But the difficulty might not be yet ended.

"Have a care, signor," said a young gallant named Beppo. "Ludovico is a treacherous man, and his blood boils when he is mad. He will never forgive you. You had better be on your guard against him."

"Aye," added another. "What he has not the courage to do openly he may seek to accomplish with the assassin's knife!"

Matteo Bellani knew that this was true, and he did not treat the caution lightly; but he had great confidence in his own strength of arm; he had still greater confidence in his firm position of Right; and the reflection that his enemy was low down in the social scale tended to put away all occasion of fear.

Little dreamed the honest artizan what marvellous things were waiting development in the coming time!

(To be continued.)

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE presence of Mr. Denham in the carriage acted as a restraint on Inez, and she repressed her restless anxiety to learn something of Mr. Fenton till she found herself alone with Mrs. Langley in the comfortable room she had prepared for the reception of her guest.

Wine and other refreshments were brought in, but Inez refused them, and after laying aside her bonnet she turned to her hostess and said:

"Now you will tell me what you promised I should learn when we reached your house. Why could not Godfrey meet me himself, and how was it that he sent you to do so?"

"My dear Miss Lopez," was the reluctant reply. "Are you not aware that you have done an unusual thing in coming here almost alone? Mr. Fenton asked me to receive you as my guest, to save you from the invidious comments of others. Of course I was only too glad to welcome you beneath my roof, and—and I hastened to town to meet you."

Inez coloured and naively asked:

"Why should it be wrong for me to come to my destined husband, Mrs. Langley? My father wished me to do so, and I thought he knew what was right for me to do. I hope that Godfrey will not think less of me for showing that I have such implicit faith in his honour. Surely he will be here very soon. If he be not ill, he will fly to my side and hasten to assure me that I have lost nothing in his estimation by the step you seem to consider so imprudent."

In a tone of deep compassion Mrs. Langley exclaimed:

"Oh, Inez, Inez, Inez! what shall I say to break the severity of the blow that must fall on you? Have you no suspicion of the truth? Is your faith in Godfrey so perfect that even his failure to meet you gives you no hint of what is impending?"

Inez sank down upon a seat as suddenly as if she had been shot, and with terrified eyes faintly gasped:

"What dreadful thing have you to say to me? Do not dare to hint that Godfrey is faithless, or I will leave your house at once. No one shall with impunity cast a shadow on his stainless honour. I believe in it, as I do in the steadfastness of my own

soul—as I do in the promises of mercy through our crucified Redeemer."

Mrs. Langley was not offended by her threat; the pity she felt for the unfortunate girl who had made shipwreck of her happiness by setting every earthly hope on so faithless a man as Godfrey Fenton neutralized every other feeling.

She sat down by Inez, took her cold hand in her own, and tremulously said:

"Look upon me as your sister, Inez. Let me comfort and sustain you in the trial that awaits you, for I now begin to understand what a fearful one it will be to you. Oh, my dear child! can you not divine what I have to say to you? Has no suspicion of the painful truth yet dawned on your trusting heart? Inez, I would sooner have chosen to put my hand in the flame of that blazing fire than tell you this thing; but it has been left to me, and I must do it as tenderly as I can."

"What thing?" vaguely asked Inez, pressing her hand upon her brow. "I begin to see dimly. Something dreadful has happened. Godfrey is dead! I feared it before—I know it now."

"Yes, Inez—dead to you, but well enough in other respects."

Though the words were spoken almost in a whisper, Mrs. Langley knew they were fully comprehended by the expression of the wild, dark eyes which were fixed upon her face with a stare of incredulous anguish that she never forgot.

"Impossible! impossible!" cried Inez, in a shrill undertone. "After all that has passed between us he cannot have forgotten me so soon—have ceased to love me. Do you believe that such a thing could be, Mrs. Langley?"

With a desperate attempt to make her fully comprehend her position towards Mr. Fenton, Mrs. Langley said:

"He has proved faithless, Inez. Godfrey is on the eve of marriage with the young girl his mother selected for his wife when they were children. Had he known the change in your circumstances a few weeks earlier he might have more firmly resisted her wishes; but Mrs. Markland carried everything before her, as she always does, and poor Godfrey yielded to her influence. I would to heaven that it had not been so, but now it is too late for him to recede."

Inez shuddered and covered her face with her hands. She faintly murmured:

"Yes—his mother—his mother has done it all. I should have known that when he came hither she would work me woe. I have always known that she was bitterly opposed to our union, but I would not believe that Godfrey could give me up at her bidding. Well—it is over now, and I will bear it better than you hoped, Mrs. Langley. I will be brave and true to myself, and he shall never know what a bitter blow his treachery has been to me."

"That is the right spirit, Inez. You will soon be able to rejoice that you have escaped marrying a man so fickle of purpose as Godfrey Fenton."

"No—no—never thankful that I have missed the pearl of my life—you cannot expect that of me. Had not that cruel woman come between us we should have been so happy together; but his mother willed it otherwise, and Godfrey has given up his heart's desire at her command. Obedience to parents is enjoined on children by the sacred Scriptures, and he—he was right perhaps to do as his mother wished; but oh! Mrs. Langley, I am inexpressibly desolate! Godfrey was all I had—all—and she has taken him from me."

"My poor Inez, I am afraid that he was willing to be taken. He has devoted himself to Opal since his return home; if he had not wooed her in every way, she would never have given her consent to marry him. I am almost sure that she was induced to accept him because she believed him to be entirely devoted to her."

The eyes of Inez flashed, but their fire was suddenly quenched by a burst of tears. After yielding to her emotion for a few moments she dried her eyes and with simple dignity spoke:

"I am quite calm now, Mrs. Langley, and I will give you no more trouble than I can help. It must have been a great annoyance to you to have such a task as this put on you, and I thank you for the kindness of heart that prompted you to undertake it. I shall make my arrangements to leave as soon as possible. I shall find the friend under whose protection I travelled hither, and he will give me his advice and assistance in the career I have only been withheld from embracing by the imaginary tie that bound me to Mr. Fenton. While there is work to be done in the world no one should die of a broken heart. Mine is sorely crushed, but in time it will recover from this blow; if it does not regain all its old elasticity, at least enough strength will be left to battle with evil, and seek to do good to others. From this hour I dedicate my life to the claims of the

needy and helpless, and with the means at my command heaven will allow me to find something to do to save me from the black night of despair that threatens to enfold me."

Mrs. Langley took her in her arms and tenderly said:

"How few girls of your age, and with your prospects, would have thought of such a refuge as that. It is worthy of your noble nature, Inez, and in your new path you will find peace and consolation, I am sure."

Inez shook her head dreadingly, and the arm that clasped her felt her slender form shiver as a reed in the wind. She extricated herself from her friend's embrace and moved restlessly towards the window. The shades of evening had not yet begun to fall, and she hurriedly said:

"There is yet time for me to return before night. I cannot stay here so near him, yet so far from him. I will go back at once, if you please, Mrs. Langley, and I know that your goodness will excuse my abrupt departure."

"Dear Inez, this must not be. You must remain with me a few days at least, for I have told others that I was expecting you as my guest; and—and—will it not be better to keep the cause of your coming from the gossiping outside world? When you are stronger and calmer you can go on your way, and, if you wish it, I will accompany you myself. I could not bear to send you away alone."

Inez was deeply touched by this kindness, and after a pause she replied:

"That will be better, perhaps. I—I do not wish to do anything that can bring blame on him. Though he has so cruelly dealt with me in leaving me to the last to believe that he was as true to me as I have been to him, I would not compromise him in any way by my unfortunate arrival here. When is he to be—"

Her lips trembled, and the word that was so painful to her died away upon them. Mrs. Langley hastened to reply to the implied question:

"The marriage is very near now—so near that—"

She broke down in her turn, and Inez quietly said:

"I comprehend you. A few more hours, and I shall have no right to think of him, except as the husband of another. Is it not so?"

Mrs. Langley kissed her pale cheek, and whispered:

"Yes—to-morrow morning he gives his hand to Opal Hastings. Poor child! I only wish that I could save her from him. Godfrey is not worthy of her, nor of you."

Inez faintly said:

"Pray leave me alone now for a time. I am very weak and I must seek strength where alone it may be found, in prayer and communion with my own heart. Do not permit anyone to come to me for an hour at least, and—and—tell Mrs. Perkins what is going to happen so soon. I cannot speak of this again to anyone."

Filled with compassion for her, and even more indignant with Mr. Fenton than before, Mrs. Langley left the room, softly closing the door behind her.

She met Mrs. Perkins on her way to her young mistress, and, drawing her into her own apartment, briefly told her why Inez wished to be left alone for a season.

The dismay of the nurse—her angry exclamations—were far stronger than anything Inez had spoken, and she sat down quite overwhelmed by her feelings.

Mrs. Langley left her to seek her brother, after telling her that she would send a servant to conduct her to the room that had been prepared for her.

She found Mr. Denham on the terrace, walking restlessly to and fro, with a lowering frown upon his brow. As soon as he saw his sister approaching he stopped, and quickly asked:

"Have you told her, Anna? Does she know that to-morrow Mr. Fenton will give his false hand to her rival?"

"Yes, she knows all, and bears it like an angel, or the next thing to it—a strong-hearted, unselfish, noble woman! Oh, Guy, if she had become the wife of Godfrey, she would have lifted him from the slough of selfishness into which he has fallen; but Opal is different—she needs someone to guide and sustain her, and he is unfit for the task. If it be true that 'we make our own path, and throw our own shadow upon it,' dark and gloomy will be that of Godfrey Fenton; and that he will make Opal tread it with him is my deepest regret."

"Don't speak of it, don't—I cannot bear it! There are moments in which I feel as if I have the right to prevent such a sacrifice, even at the risk of life itself. If I thought my darling loved him, it would be easier to give her up to him; but she has been hurried on by others till every avenue of escape was

closed, and with her child-heart uncertain as to what it needs she has accepted the destiny prepared for her. Oh, it is bitter, bitter to know this, yet feel how helpless I am to rescue her from the unhappy fate she is embracing!"

Tears fell from the eyes of the strong man, and he leaned helplessly against a pillar, wrestling with the emotions that overcame him.

Mrs. Langley placed her arm tenderly around his neck, and gently said:

"Prove yourself as equal to bear your burden as that hapless girl in yonder. It is harder on her, for she has no ambition to turn to for consolation—no busy life to enter on to wear away the keen edge of her suffering. Yet I am wrong in saying that, for she has already turned her thoughts towards finding consolation in benefiting others. She will become a Sister of Charity—in time perhaps a nun. I am glad that avenue is open to her; and, with her large fortune, she can do much good in the new life she contemplates."

Mr. Denham sighed heavily, and sadly said:

"It is the best thing she can do. I think I understand such natures as hers. She will find no other to fill the place in her heart that has been held by that unprincipled ingrate. Unworthy as he is, Godfrey Fenton has been everything to Inez Lopez, as Opal has been to me the pearl of price I desired to win. That man has blighted two lives, and it is my conviction that he will blight a third one if he be permitted to live to do so."

"Guy, dear Guy, do not talk in that way! It fills me with unspeakable dread to hear you. If you should raise your hand against him, remember that you will open a gulf between yourself and Opal that would never be closed again."

Mr. Denham muttered something she could not understand, and, starting away from her, recommenced his agitated walk. His sister followed him, and imploringly cried:

"Stay with me, Guy. Do not go to Silvermere to see the sacrifice completed. Something dreadful may happen if you do. Oh, my dearest brother, speak to me and take from my heart the weight that is pressing on it. Say that you will not leave the house."

Mr. Denham stopped suddenly and turned his agitated face towards her. He almost roughly said:

"I will give no such promise as that, but I shall not attend the wedding. Do you suppose that I could see Opal pledge her vows to any other man? You understand me very little if you think me capable of that. Heaven help me! I have lost her, but I could not look on while she seals her own wretchedness by giving her hand to one so unworthy of her as Godfrey Fenton."

A little reassured, Mrs. Langley left him, saying:

"Neither shall I attend. I will go in now and write an excuse for both of us to Mrs. Hastings."

"Do so," was the brief reply.

And Mr. Denham continued to pace the length of the terrace, till the shadows of evening gathered over the landscape.

A servant came to tell him that supper was served, but he refused to go in to it, though he drank the cup of coffee his sister sent out to him. A few moments afterwards he went towards the stable, ordered his horse to be saddled, and mounting him, rode away in the gathering darkness.

CHAPTER LXXI.

ALL was bright and festive in the halls of Silvermere.

Though the company was not to be large, as extensive preparations as were possible in the limited time had been made, and a magnificent repast was prepared. A band of music sent its gay strains abroad upon the scene.

Opal, in a whirl of feeling that seemed to her to verge on insanity, was in her room with Dora, who was her only bridesmaid. Her toilet was completed, and she stood before the mirror arrayed in costly lace and satin, with the gems after which she was named gleaming on her neck and arms, and all the colour about her was found in the fiery coruscations of her jewels as she moved listlessly to a seat.

Snow could scarcely have looked whiter or calmer than she did now. Doubt, fear, and irresolution seemed to have died out beneath the certainty that there was no escape from the fate she had accepted. Her lot in life was fixed; she would do the best she could with it and never suffer Mr. Fenton to know that the love she believed he felt for her was not returned with her whole heart. So she calmly awaited the moment which would irrevocably give her to him.

Dora looked anxiously at her, and said:

"How pale you are, Opal! Are you frightened? I know I should be if I were going to be married."

"No, I do not think I am frightened, Dora. Why

should I be afraid of Godfrey? We have known each other from childhood, and I am sure he will always be kind to me. Mamma says that confidence in each other is the basis of happiness between married people; and, if that be so, I have little cause to dread the future. I have faith in Godfrey's nobleness, and he trusts me."

"You may well have faith in him, Opal, for he is the dearest creature in the world. See what a beautiful watch and chain he has given me to wear this morning. I have been teasing mamma to give me one for the last two years, but she said I should be sure to break it directly if I had one. Godfrey only heard me say once that I wanted one, and he bought me this yesterday. Isn't it a beauty?"

And Dora displayed a small enamelled watch, with a spray of brilliants set in the case.

Opal glanced at it, and dreamily said:

"It is very pretty, and I am glad that Godfrey was so thoughtful."

But she became paler than before as she saw that the hands pointed to ten minutes to the hour, and, with a pang, she thought how short the time that lay between herself and the sacrifice she was about to complete.

Her brain seemed reeling, but she recovered herself with an effort when she heard footsteps approaching her room.

Opal knew who was coming, and she called up a smile to welcome the bridegroom, at whose approach she felt as if every drop of blood in her veins was turning to ice.

Mr. Fenton, looking magnificently handsome and radiant with triumph, came in, preceded by his mother and Mrs. Hastings.

He went up to his bride, took her hand in his, and tenderly said:

"Do not tremble so, my frightened dove. The ordeal will soon be over; and getting married isn't such a frightful thing after all. I have conquered all my tremors, and you will smile at yours presently."

Mrs. Markland kissed her, and her mother anxiously regarded her as she said:

"You are too pale, Opal. Let me put the faintest tinge of rouge upon your cheeks; it will be wonderfully becoming."

Opal mutely shook her head; but Godfrey looked at her and said:

"You will not be paler when you are dead, Opal. Let your mother do as she wishes, or people may say that you go to the altar as a sacrifice. I know better, of course; but we need give no food to the gossips that can be helped."

"As you please, Godfrey," came from her lips with an effort; and Mrs. Hastings dextrously applied a small piece of pink wool she took from her pocket to her pallid cheeks, imparting a pale rose tint which took from her face its look of lifelessness.

Opal took the offered arm of Mr. Fenton, listened mechanically to the tender words he whispered in her ear, and moved towards the door, near which his groomsmen, Edward Wallis, was awaiting their appearance.

The bridal party paused a moment in the upper hall to allow the two elder ladies to descend before them, and then wound down the wide staircase, preceded by Jenny and another little girl.

Not more than fifty persons had assembled to witness the marriage, who were mostly connexions of the two families. The large drawing-room still had sufficient space left to permit the handsome couple to be seen to the best advantage.

The clergyman in his robes stood ready to receive them, and, long as the ceremony was, it seemed to Opal that scarcely a moment of time had elapsed before she heard herself pronounced the wife of Godfrey Fenton. She had mechanically made the responses, though at the moment she had scarcely any more comprehension of the words she uttered than if they had been spoken in Hebrew.

When it was over her father took her in his arms, kissed and blessed her, and then resigned her to the congratulations of those who were eagerly pressing around her.

During the next half-hour there was a perfect Babel of tongues, and Opal recovered her self-possession sufficiently to return smiles and gracious replies to those who offered good wishes for her future happiness and prosperity.

The breakfast-room was thrown open, revealing an exquisitely adorned table, covered with every delicacy that could tempt the appetite.

The guests gathered around it, and did ample justice to the feast provided for them. The health of the newly married couple was drunk in bumpers of sparkling champagne, and more than one present noticed that the bridegroom took glass after glass with everyone who offered to drink with him.

Before the repast was over Mr. Fenton began to feel the fumes of the wine mounting to his brain;

but he had already learned to love its exhilarating effects too well to refrain, even at such a time as this.

Opal was beginning to recover from the chilling dread that had almost frozen the springs of life at their source, when her composure was almost put to flight by overhearing someone ask:

"Where is Guy Denham? How happens it that neither he, nor Mrs. Langley is here? Such near connexions of Mr. Fenton's I thought would be sure to be present."

"Hush!" replied a warning voice, lowered to a confidential tone; but through the laughter and noise around her Opal distinctly heard every word. "Don't you know that poor Guy is melancholy mad because he has been rivalled? Last night I met him riding through the woods like one demented. I stopped him and asked him if he were coming to the wedding, and he scowled at me as if he were ready to fly at me and take my life; but with his usual good breeding he soon recollected himself, and said that his sister had company at Ashwood which would detain her at home, and he therefore declined attending also. When we parted I looked back after him and saw that he had put his horse to full speed again, and I then understood the feelings that were surging in his soul. It is a pity for him, for Guy is a noble fellow; but the fair Opal has made what her parents consider a more brilliant match than Mr. Denham would have been."

"I do not know why. If justice had been done by Mrs. Markland, her son would have been no better off than Guy—not so well off, in fact, for he has lately had some money left him."

"I know. But this marriage has been a settled thing so long that Mr. Denham was foolish to set his heart on a girl who was beyond his reach. It's a serious thing with him, I tell you, for—"

At that moment a move was made to leave the table; the music swept in joyous strains through the air, and Opal, feeling faint and sick at heart, was taken back to the drawing-room, and sat down on a sofa, trying to throw aside the memory of what she had overheard.

Godfrey left her there, saying that he wished to go out into the air, really to dissipate the effects of the unusual quantity of wine he had drunk. His head was becoming unsteady, and he was beginning to awake fully to the disgrace it would be to him to become intoxicated on the day of his marriage.

He asked for a goblet of milk, and after drinking it felt less giddy. Thinking that a turn in the shrubbery would quite restore him the use of his faculties, he made his way around the house and moved bare-headed down the carriage drive.

Feeling much better for his *al fresco* promenade, he turned to retrace his steps. He, too, had heard that company at Ashwood detained Mrs. Langley at home, and well knew who was there. What bitter anguish was flooding one trusting heart while he was pledging his faith to his newly wedded bride. Now that it was too late he bitterly repented of what he had done. He would gladly have gone to Inez had it been possible to do so; but a wall of adamant had arisen between them, built up by his own reckless hands, and he must make the best of the fate he himself had courted.

Mr. Fenton had moved forward but a few yards when the heavens seemed suddenly to open and its lightnings to strike him through the heart.

From a clump of evergreens that stood on one side of the road a pistol was discharged within a few feet of his breast. Three shots were fired in rapid succession, as if the murderer was resolved to make sure of the victim, and Mr. Fenton fell forward on his face without uttering a single cry.

There was a rush of many feet towards the spot on which he lay, for several gentlemen were on the portico and heard the shots. Cries of rage and terror were heard when they reached the fallen man, followed by that dreadful stillness which falls on all when the worst is known. The gay bridegroom was found lying on the sward, his embroidered vest covered with blood that welled from his breast, and those who looked upon his face knew that the solemn seal of death was upon it.

Life was already extinct, and swift and sure had been his doom. He must have passed into eternity almost before he realized his own danger.

The shrubbery was eagerly searched, and a pistol, which had been recently discharged, was found upon the grass within a few feet of the murdered man. Wallis picked it up, and with terror in his face cried out:

"Good heaven! it is Guy Denham's pistol! He must have done this dastardly deed. Search the grounds; find the murderer and secure him. I offer a reward of five hundred pounds for his apprehension. I will head the pursuit myself, for I had rather do that than face the scene in yonder when poor Godfrey is carried in."

There was eager mounting on horseback, and an excited cavalcade set forward to scour the grounds, and, if necessary, seek Guy Denham at Ashwood, for that he was the criminal all seemed to agree.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

A TRAVELLER was induced to go into a cook-shop by this inscription, "Roast and boiled at twopence a head." He was not a little disappointed by two courses of potatoes.

AGE.—A dandy of twenty-six having been termed an "old bachelor," appealed to an elderly gentleman to decide whether he should be called old or not, giving his age. "Twenty-six," said the elderly gentleman. "It is owing to how you take it. Now, for a man, it is young enough; but for a goose it is rather old."

CHILDREN ARE SO ARTLESS.

Baker: "Another penny, my dear; bread's up to-day."

Girl: "Yes; but mother wants yesterday's bake."

A FEW nights ago a boy was asked how he liked his new school, and how he was getting on. He replied, "Very well, and I am to get essays to write." His little sister said, with a smile, "Only at S's yet! I am a long way past that, for I am writing W's."

THE ABYSSINIAN BORE.

That King Theodorus

Is likely to bore us;

Our endeavour his captives to free,

Will impose on our backs

An increased Income-Tax

Of a penny—and more it may be.

But dash the expense

Howsoever immense,

We can do nothing cheaper than fight,

And our neighbours let know

That to war we can go

When we choose, and believe it is right.

Did mere glory's call

A sum, e'er so small,

Upon soldiering, powder, and shot,

Bid us squander away,

Our response would be "Nay,

Not a halfpenny; certainly not."

Punch.

THE NEGUS OF ABYSSINIA.—Apropos of the Negus of Abyssinia, there is no want of whine (in some of the papers), but the real difficulty is, to say where the water is to come from.—Punch.

COMMUNIQUE (from the *Heralds' College*).—Mr. Jacob Bright, in consideration of Miss Lily Maxwell's having recorded for him the first lady's vote ever registered, is to be allowed to wear his coat with a difference—a *fleur de lys*, rampant, of the first.—Punch.

A DEFAULTING GLAZIER.—Mr. Glaisher is publishing letters about the star-showers of the 14th ult., which have been seen in Canada, and should have been seen here, but weren't. We call on Mr. Glaisher to repair "the windows of the dark," so that people may be able to see through them on such occasions. What is the use of keeping a Glaisher at the Greenwich Observatory if he won't attend to his business?—Punch.

FAMILY PRIDE.

First Boy: "My father's a officer."

Second Boy: "What officer?"

First Boy: "Why, a corporal!"

Third Boy (evidently "comic"): "So's my father—he's a officer, too—a general he is!"

Fourth Boy: "Go along with yer!"

Third Boy: "So he is—he's a general dealer!!"—Punch.

A LESSON TO GRUMBLERS.—Why should small people complain of the dearth of provisions when the upper classes are so patient under similar privations? Look at the Members of Parliament who have been summoned on the 19th of November, to be prorogued in the first week of December. You don't hear them complain of such decidedly "Short Commons."—Punch.

It is worthy remark as at least a curious coincidence—whether or not any cause may be assigned to such a fact—that three successive Speakers of the House of Commons, including the present functionary, should have been operative shoemakers. Some crafts, more than others, would seem to possess the fortunate peculiarity of getting largely represented in the House of Commons; while there are trades which unaccountably keep aloof from the Legislature of the United Kingdom. Two members of the present Cabinet, three Government supporters,

and seven of the Opposition, are bricklayers; but there is not one chimney sweep on either side the House. Nor are there any bakers, I believe, in Parliament. On the other hand, butchers, glass-blowers, tallow-melters, tinnmen, bird-catchers, book-binders, stokers, cokers, brokers, gardeners, firemen, watermen, gasmen, carpet-beaters, boot-closers, drivers, and divers others to boot, have seats in the Legislature. Why is this? I have long puzzled my mind, in vain, to account for the discrepancy.—Fun.

ARISTOCRACY IN BUSINESS.

Scene.—A Linen-Draper's Shop, the Establishment of Messrs. Twill & Pophins; Cecil Catesby behind the counter.

Cecil: Haw! Here I am; not, as the British vocalist used to say, like love among the roses; no, but doosidly like George Barrowell. Only I'm not going to shoot the Duke of Shropshire—hanged if I do; besides, that would be no good unless I killed—let me see how many [counts on his fingers], one, two, three, four, five cousins, between me and the dukedom.

Enter Lady Fanshawe and Constance. They approach the Counter.

Lady F. (to Constance): Well, how extraordinary! What an absurd likeness!

Constance: Ridiculous, isn't it?

Cecil: How do you do, Lady Fanshawe? [to Lady F., who starts with surprise, and surveys him through her eye-glass]. And you? [to Constance, who gasps in speechless astonishment]. Ah! After the six quadrilles we danced together last night at the Countess of Brompton's, darsay you didn't expect to see me here. Suppose you weren't aware that I had gone into business. Haw! But business is business, you know. So now, ladies, what can I do for you?

Lady F.: Mr. Cecil Catesby! what escapade is this? What do you do there, sir?

Cecil: Serve as shopman to acquire a knowledge of practical haberdashery.

Constance: Dear me! To report, I suppose, on manufactures. What strange duties they now exact from an attaché. What Courtesie are you going to?

Cecil: No court very far from St. Martin's. I am simply going into the drapery line; and am here to learn my business. I am, really and truly. [Lady F. and Constance lift up their hands with astonishment.] It's a fact, I assure you. Every fellow is going into business now. What's a fellow to do unless he has lots of tin? He can't live in the army. The law is a lottery, and doosid hard work. The other professions are equally laborious, and at best beggarly pay. There's nothing for a fellow now but trade. Young Maltravers is going into trade—the wine and coal trade. Young Mowbray—he's going into trade, too—going to be a grocer and tea-dealer. Young Mortimer thinks of being a tobaccoist. Here I am, a linen-draper—or rather, at present, a linen-draper's shopman. In that capacity what shall I have the honour of showing you? Montgomery, a chair for these ladies.

Lady F.: Excuse me; but this is really so odd! In trade—a linen-draper's shopman!

Cecil: Well, the shop will be carried on under the name of the firm Twill & Pophins (Limited). But, between ourselves, the business has been purchased by a company consisting of noblemen and gentlemen, with the Duke at the head of them.

Lady F.: The Duke of Shropshire! You don't say so!

Cecil: Indeed, but I do.

Constance: Your uncle?

Cecil: Why not? The dukes are all going into business. Now let us do business, if you please. What is it that you ladies would wish to-day—silks, satins, moiré antique, lace or what other description of goods?

Lady F.: This is so strange that I positively cannot help laughing. But come, I want a black silk.

Cecil (unfolds a quantity): There! Now I can assure you you will find this a most excellent article [holds it up to the light, and flaps it]. I'll warrant you it will wear. If you will please to examine the fabric—see [unravels a bit of the salvage with his finger and thumbnails], this is genuine silk, without any admixture of cotton.

Lady F.: H'm! What is the price of that silk?

Cecil: We are selling that article at thirty-nine and six.

Lady F.: You must take off the six.

Cecil: Non possumus: Couldn't do it at this establishment; couldn't, really. Here are other silks, all of which I can recommend with more or less confidence.

[Displays a series.

Lady F.: Well, Constance, what do you think?

Constance: That you cannot do better, mamma, than take Mr. Catesby's advice.

Lady F.: Very well, then.

Cecil: Shall I send this [pointing to silk] for your ladyship?

Lady F.: No; we will take it with us in the carriage; and I'll pay for it now, if you please.

Cecil: Cashier! Change, instantly, for a twenty-pound note! [Cashier comes, twirling his moustache, with change on a tray.] Thanks, Plantagenet! Allow me [to Lady F.] to make you out a little bill. [Writes, and hands her bill, with change.] Thank your ladyship. I have not thought it necessary to ask your ladyship if there was any other article. But I may as well just mention that we have some mantles remarkably cheap, a picked variety of muslins, Valencia silks, damasks, Cashmeres, Kerseys, Valenciennes, tulle illusion, all of first quality. We have, also, some extraordinary gloves.

Lady F.: That is all at present.

Cecil: Not to bore you, but might I suggest that if any under-clothing—

Lady F.: Thank you, not any. Good morning. [They rise to retire.

Cecil: Let me see you to your carriage. [Vaults over the counter.

Lady F.: Well, Mr. Catesby, you do seem determined to make yourself a perfect shopman.

Cecil: Thoroughly accomplished. But whilst we fellows are shopkeepers, mind you, we mean also to be gentlemen. We intend to do business as such. That is our little game. On that principle we go in to win. No false tickets in the window. No tremendous sacrifices at this shop. No alarming failure—at any rate we hope so; we expect to succeed by avoiding puffing and fraud; and, in short, pursuing a line precisely the opposite to that of the shop over the way.

Lady F.: A very praiseworthy resolution. Mind you keep it. [Exit.

Constance [following Lady F., turns round]: Yes, mind you do.

Cecil [to Constance]: Shall I see you in the Row this afternoon?

Constance: Perhaps.

Cecil: I'll bring a price list of our stock.

Constance [laughing]: Oh, very well! Do. Good-bye. [Exit.

Cecil [waving his hand at the shop door]: Ta ta! [Returning across shop.] Haw! Should like her deosidly for a partner. But no fellow could furnish such a girl as that in these days under five thousand a year. An income only to be made in trade. Must set to work and make it, by Jove. Haven't the slightest doubt in the world that we shall all of us fellows become millionaires in no time, simply by carrying out the idea of doing business with strict regard to the ingenious dodge of honesty. That will be our way of shaving the ladies. [Scene closes.

CUTTING.—The Japanese ambassadors have published their experiences. They state that Earl Russell has adopted a Japanese custom, for he is the statesman that (1) rips himself up oftenest in his own dispatches.

In a statement of accounts of the Borough of Arundel, just issued, a curious printer's error occurs. An item appears in the expenditure thus: "Cleaning and regulating the town clerk, 11. 0s. 6d."—the word "clerk" being misprinted for "clock."

A DOUBTFUL COMPLIMENT.—A young lady in company with a right reverend prelate consented, after a long and coy resistance, to be led to the piano. She played and sang so badly that the auditors hesitated to express their thanks. In this strait his lordship arose, and crossing the room said, with his sweetest smile, "Thank you, Miss —, very particularly. Another time, when you say you can't sing, we shall all know how to believe you."

CURIOSITY.

A person of an observing turn of mind, if he has rode through a country town, has noticed how curious youngsters along the route will fill the windows with their anxious faces, in order to get a glimpse at all passers-by. A pedlar drove up in front of a house one day, and, seeing all hands and the cook staring, got off from his cart, and the following dialogue took place with the man of the house:

Pedlar:—Has there been a funeral here lately?"

Man of the House:—"No; why?"

Pedlar:—"I saw there was one pane of glass that didn't have a head in it."

Man of the House:—"You'd better leave quick, or there will be a funeral."

INFANTILE REASONING.—"Papa," said a bright-eyed little girl one day, "I believe mamma loves you better'n she does me." Papa held doubts on that subject, but concluded that it was not best to deny the self-impachment. She meditated thoughtfully about it for some time, evidently construing her father's silence as favourable to her side. "Well,"

said she, at last, "I s'pose it's all right; you're the biggest, and it takes more to love you."

MANUFACTURING VOTES.—No doubt Mr. Disraeli thought he had made quite a new invention when by his Reform Bill he created the new elector. But the Yankees were put on their mettle, and they have beaten him. An American citizen has just applied at Washington for a patent for "a voting machine."—*Fun.*

CAUTION TO SISTERS.

Harriet: "I say, Charley, I've been stealing some of your scent; but it isn't very nice—something odd about it—smell!"

Charley: "Not wiped your lips with it, I hope? It's the new stuff for my monstaches—brings 'em out an inch every night!"—*Punch.*

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.—A man in Yorkshire was prosecuted for kicking his wife out of bed. His counsel admitted the charge, but said there were extenuating circumstances. "What are they?" asked the magistrate. "She persistently scratched his back with a currycomb, may it please your honour." "It don't please me at all, and I dismiss the complaint," was the magisterial response.

THE GOOD OLD YEAR.

The good old year is ebbing fast,
And while it fadeth from my sight
I sigh to think the past is past,
With all its pulses of delight.

To think our mortal life should end,
Pent up within such narrow range;
And all our happiness depend
On slightest circumstance of change.

When, lo! a voice as from the dead
Breathed inward to my listening heart;
"And if the past be past," it said,
"Grieve not because thy years depart."

As morning cloud, or mountain mist,
As dew the rising sun must chase,
As foam upon the ocean's breast,
And shadows on the dial's face—

A stately ship, that passeth by
Nor marks the water with her keel;
A dart, that cleaves the yielding sky
Whose closing atoms quickly heal—

A wandering bird, that seeketh rest,
A post, that hasteth on its way,
The sweet remembrance of a guest
Who tarrieth only for a day—

As thistledown, that floateth light
Up wafted by the summer wind—
So year by year we take our flight,
Nor seem to leave a track behind.

But as these passing things seem past
Unto the finite sense alone,
So years and seasons fleeting fast
Appear, but are not really flown.

For they are swept by time's great river
Onward and onward to the shore
Where past and future mingle ever,
And time's divisions are no more.

There will they stand, a scarred band,
And as ye make them here below,
Will meet you in that far-off land
As pleading friend or armed foe.

GEMS.

MANNER.—There is no policy like politeness; and a good manner is the best thing in the world, either to get a good name or to supply the want of it.

If you sink a shaft down deep into the most depraved human being, and take the lamp of love down there, you will always find a gleaming vein of pure gold, which is beautiful amid its dark surroundings.

PRIDE.—Pride emanates from a weak mind. You never see a man of strong intellect proud and haughty. Just look about you. Who are the most given to this folly? Not the intelligent and talented but the weak minded and the silly.

AUTOMATIC COOKERY.—A Norwegian cooking apparatus exhibited at the Exposition consists of a wooden box lined with some non-conducting material, and containing a tin vessel which fits into the stuffed aperture of the box. The stuffed lining is so poor a heat-conductor that water in the interior tin box only cools down from 212 degrees F. to 172 degrees F. in 17 hours. In cooking a piece of beef the meat is placed with water in the tin vessel, over an ordi-

* FAWCETT'S Fashionable Repository for 1853.

nary fire, until the water has boiled for five minutes, when the vessel, with its contents, is quickly placed in the isolated apparatus, and left alone for three hours, when the beef is found to be thoroughly boiled. This mode of cooking is pronounced the truly philosophic one, the maximum nutritive quality being retained. Economy of fuel and great saving in labour are other recommendations. The patentee lately had all the materials for a *pot au feu* prepared, and shut up in the apparatus at Paris, and brought it with him to London, where it was opened, and furnished a smoking hot meal four hours after leaving the fire.

STATISTICS.

By the Custom House returns, recently published, a list is given of the number of gallons of wine (from all countries) on which duty was paid in the port of London, during the past six months of the present year, by the various firms in the wine trade. From this document we learn that there were upwards of 2,000 firms who paid duty on less than 3,000 galls.; 83 firms who paid duty on more than 3,000 and less than 5,000 galls.; 67 on more than 5,000 and less than 10,000 galls.; 49 on more than 10,000 and less than 20,000 galls.; and 26 on more than 20,000 and less than 50,000 galls. There were 7 firms who paid duty on more than 50,000 galls.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.—The provinces of British North America contain collectively an area of 682,860 square miles, and in 1861 a total population of 3,328,872 persons. By the official statistical abstract lately published it is found that in 1865 the gross amount of public revenue was 3,254,019*l.*, nearly 2,500,000*l.* of which belonged to Canada. The gross expenditure had between 1859 and 1865 inclusive increased by a million, the maximum year during this interval, of revenue as well as of expenditure, being 1864. Between 1852 and 1865 the public debt of Canada rose from 4,000,000*l.* to more than 12,500,000*l.*, the maximum occurring, however, in 1863. The total tonnage of vessels entered and cleared at Newfoundland between 1859 and 1865 varied considerably, being represented by 409,000 tons in 1859, and 270,000 tons only in 1865. The value of imports to British North America in 1865 was 16,225,767*l.*, 9,000,000*l.* of which belonged to Canada, 2,800,000*l.* to Nova Scotia, 1,400,000*l.* to New Brunswick, and 1,000,000*l.* to Newfoundland, exclusive, as to the three latter, of bullion and specie. The total exports during the above interval rose progressively, and in 1865 were valued at more than 13,000,000*l.* sterling. The principal articles exported from Canada are white pine, planks, and boards, flour, wool, horses, barley, and rye, oats, peas, and wheat. The total value of dry codfish exported from Newfoundland in 1865 was 706,352*l.*; of unrefined cod-oil, 136,356*l.*; and of seal-oil, 156,578*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Californian silk-growers are exporting silkworm eggs to France at the rate of 2*l.* an ounce.

No less than seven sharks have appeared on the English coast between the Isle of Wight and the North Foreland within a few days. At the same time large numbers of mackerel have appeared; they are not due at this period of the year.

THE PARIS BAKERS.—An ordinance of the Prefect of Police of Paris, dated the 14th ult., directs that bakers within the police jurisdiction must sell their bread by weight, and must weigh it in presence of the purchaser, even without being requested to do so.

THE VINTAGE IN FRANCE.—According to French advices, the vintage has turned out unfavourably. Eleven hogsheads of wine will not make more brandy than seven hogsheads did in 1865. The French cognac merchants will not take orders at any prices for the present.

WHAT NEXT?—An American genius has arrived in London with a most miraculous breech-loading gun, the invention of which he solemnly asserts was communicated to him by two spirits of the departed! He is now en route for Paris to exhibit the new wonder in the shape of a death-dealing instrument to the Emperor.

THE PYRENEES DISAPPEARING.—A Madrid paper laments over the fact which scientific researches have established, that the range of the Pyrenees mountains during the space of twenty years has lost about one hundred feet in altitude, and proceeds to make a calculation whereby it appears that after the lapse of one thousand years the chain separating France and Spain will be no more, in which case the Ebro will empty into the Bay of Biscay instead of the Mediterranean.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CONSTANCE.—*Proux chealter* means a bold, valiant, or gallant knight; and *au sérieux*, in the most serious manner. W. CORRETT.—"Isabel" is much too lengthy for our columns, and is therefore respectfully declined. L. J. M.—"Woman's Love" is very faulty, consequently is declined; but as it is a first attempt a future one may prove more successful.

A SUBSCRIBER, FLYMOOT.—See our answer to "A Subscriber from the First," that we think will meet your case.

A POOR GIRL.—Apply to the Secretary, Foundling Hospital, Guildford Street, Brunswick Square. In Paris, apply to L'Hôpital des Enfants Trouvés.

ORIELLO.—Without doubt a ring would be a most appropriate present, the more especially if you be engaged to the lady.

BENSON.—If you cannot afford to be married by licence, why not by banns? You have only to apply to the parish clerk, who will give you every information.

KATE W.—1. Any bookseller will supply you with the volume in question. 2. "I thank you" is most correct; "thanks" is only a vulgar affection.

ADA.—The tears of beauty are like light clouds floating over a heaven of stars, bedimmed them for a moment, that they may shine with greater lustre than before. FEMININE.—*Clogmore* is a Gaelic word signifying great glaise or sword; properly a great two-handed sword, used by the Highlanders only.

A COUNTRY GIRL.—Address a letter to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for India, the India Office, Westminster; or the Messrs. Grindlay, India Army agents, of Parliament Street, would give you any information.

FREDERICK WEBSTER.—We are most happy to give every consideration to all communications; at the same time, we must refer this correspondent to the notice given in the last column of the correspondence page.

W. Y.—The salmon taken in the river Mersey in the first year are called smelts; the second, arods; the third, morris; the fourth, forklake; the fifth, half-fish; and the sixth, when full grown, salmon.

DURKEATH.—1. Yes, and coloured pearls also. Of the latter Mr. Hope exhibited some very rare specimens in the Great Exhibition of 1851. 2. 250,000l. per annum. 3. Alcohol is described by Walker as a highly rectified spirit of wine.

C. D. A.—What you complain of most frequently arises from indigestion, but whether from that or any other cause, your best course will be to take plenty of exercise, be temperate in diet, and occasionally have recourse to warm bathing.

ANNE.—To make an ordinary syllabub put a pint of cider and a bottle of strong beer into a large bowl, grate into it a nutmeg, and sweeten according to taste; milk upon it as much milk as will form a strong froth, then let it stand, and strain over it some currants well washed and picked.

DANIEL.—*Asphaltos* is a bituminous, inflammable substance, resembling pitch, and chiefly found swimming on the surface of the *Lacus Asphaltites* or *Dead Sea*, where anciently stood the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. *Asphaltum* is a bituminous stone found near the ancient Babylon.

JONAS WEBSTER.—Half a pound of beeswax, and a ½ oz. of almond root, melted together in a pipkin, until the former is well coloured, then add 1 gill each of linseed oil and spirits of turpentine, and strain through a piece of coarse muslin; this mixture will form an excellent polish. Your better course, however, would be to purchase it ready made.

HORACE.—The Lord Advocate is the principal law officer of the Crown in Scotland. He pleads in all cases that concern the Crown, acts as public prosecutor and superintends the general administration of criminal justice. He also undertakes in Parliament the charge of all Bills relating to Scotland.

VISIT.—*Aden* is a military and naval station situated on the northern shore of the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, peculiarly fitted to command the commerce of the Red Sea, and to form a coal depot for steamers plying between India and Suez. In 1839 Aden was captured by the British, and has since remained a British garrison.

RUMEL.—The *Baya*, or *Bottle-nosed Sparrow*, is remarkable for its pendant nest, brilliant plumage, and uncommon sagacity. These birds are found in most parts of Hindostan; in shape they resemble the common sparrow, also in the brown feathers of the back and wings; the head and breast are of a bright yellow, and in the rays of a tropical sun have a splendid appearance when flying by thousands in the same grove. Their nests are formed in a most ingenious manner by long grass woven together in the shape of a

bottle, with the neck hanging downwards, and suspended by the other end to the extremity of a pliable branch, in order to secure the eggs and young brood from serpents and birds of prey. These nests contain several apartments, appropriated to different purposes; in one the hen performs the office of incubation; another, consisting of a little thatched roof, covering a perch, is occupied by the mate, who, with his chirping notes, cheers the female during her maternal duties. The Hindoos are very fond of these birds; when young they teach them to fetch and carry.

Z. A. K.—To get rid of pimples and little black spots on the face and chest the following is a good recipe: 1 lb. Castile soap, 1 gallon of water; dissolve; then add 1 quart of alcohol, 2 drachms each of oil of rosemary and oil of lavender; mix all together, and bathe the face or parts affected with it occasionally.

MARIAH.—To make wine when put ½ pint of new milk over the fire, and the moment it boils pour in two glasses of wine and a teaspoonful of powdered sugar, previously mixed; the curd will soon form, and after it is boiled set it aside until the curd settles, then pour the whey off, add a pint of boiling water and some loaf sugar. This is an excellent drink in typhus and other fevers, debility, &c.

ALPHONSE.—Good sense and good nature are never separated. Good nature, by which is understood beneficence and candour, is the result of right reasoning, which of necessity will give allowance to the failings of others by considering that there is nothing perfect in mankind, thereby distinguishing that which comes nearest to excellency, though not absolutely free from faults, and producing candour in the judge.

ALFRED.—1. The only thing we can advise is to take plenty of open-air exercise. If that does not prove effectual, rest content with Dame Nature, and show that you have a stronger mind than your friends who tease you, by laughing at them. 2. Handwriting by no means good, but may be improved. Procure some books with ready set printed copies; apply yourself with diligence and care to imitate them, and a short time will doubtless produce a great improvement.

TO MY WATCH-CASE.—A LADY'S GIFT.

Time to me comes cast in beauty!

Perfect beauty—perfect art.

Ah, how more than simple duty

Is an offering of the heart!

Wrought by Friendship's faithful fingers,

With a lady's matchless taste,

Sweet the influence—how it lingers,

Never from the soul effaced.

In my watch-case, true ideal

Of a bright and happy state,

Now I see that life is real

In the smallest things of fate.

Dear moments! In my chamber

Thou shalt hang—a pleasing gift,

And, while through all time I wander,

Holler thoughts to heaven uplift.

W. M. F.

P. J.—We have received no previous letter from you. Suffering as you describe yourself to be, placing yourself under the treatment of the notorious quack and charlatan you name would be tantamount to committing suicide. You can only be cured by the advice of an ordinary medical man, and adhering to his advice. You say you have had the advice of two medical men; if so, you have not acted up to their instructions or you would have been cured long since.

A SUBSCRIBER FROM THE FIRST.—1. The Royal Hospital for Incurables is at Putney, Surrey, S.W. It was instituted for the permanent cure or relief of persons suffering from incurable diseases. 2. Apply to the secretary, 10, Poultry, E.C., who will give you all particulars in detail. 3. The admission is by election of the governors. 4. The "British" Home for Incurables is at Clapham Rise. The admission is by election or a small payment; for particulars of the latter institution apply to G. Weaver, Esq., secretary, 73, Cheap-side.

W. B. D.—1. Stout, or good, wholesome beer in moderation, and oysters when in season. 2. If you really desire to improve your health immediately discontinue smoking. Nothing can be worse for a person of your age and suffering, too, from palpitation of the heart. The discontinuance of this baneful practice will in all probability restore you to full health. Certain constitutions may not be injured by moderate smoking; from your description, however, of your sufferings, yours is certainly not one of them. Do not forget the advantages to be obtained in your case from fresh air and exercise.

OTTO.—In order to prepare a beautiful, transparent coloured paper for tracing it is best to employ the varnish formed from Damara resin, in the following way: The sheets intended for the purpose must be placed flat on each other, and the varnish spread over the uppermost sheet with a brush, until the paper appears perfectly colourless, without the liquid thereon being visible. This sheet must then be removed, hung up to dry, and the second treated in the same way. After being dried this paper will be fit to be written upon, either with chalk, pencil, or steel pens; it preserves its colourless transparency without becoming yellow, as is frequently the case with that prepared in any other way.

B. D.—A doctor of music is a musician upon whom the degree of doctor has been conferred by some university; the name of the first professor to whom this title was granted not being clearly known, the date of its origin in England is uncertain. According to Anthony Wood, it was in the reign of Henry II. while Spelman fixed its foundation in that of John. By the qualifications formerly required of a candidate for this degree it is clearly shown that music was considered a purely speculative science; by the modern statutes, however, higher qualifications are rendered necessary, the candidate being required to submit for the inspection of the musical professor a composition in eight vocal parts with instrumental accompaniments.

C. D.—Many very interesting samples of paper manufactured from wood have been shown at the Paris Exhibition. The invention is not new, but the processes by which the fibres are treated, the method of whitening the material and converting it into a pulp for the manufacture of ex-

cellent paper, have only now been successful; and the factories in operation in France and elsewhere abroad are preparing daily from 1,000 to 2,000 and, in some instances, 10,000 kilogrammes of pulp per day from wood, for the production of white paper. Hitherto there has been great difficulty in producing paper from woody substances, on account of its not receiving ink and pressure without deterioration.

Z. Y. X., twenty-one, rather tall, good looking, and in business for himself. Respondent must be good looking.

Z. A., of middle age, and good tempered. Respondent must be fair, intelligent, and respectfully connected.

C. B., twenty, a sailor, tall, and good looking. Respondent must be ladylike.

SARAH BURNING, gray eyes, black hair, and rosy cheeks. Respondent must be good looking and have a little money.

TOM, twenty-six, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, in a thriving business, with an income of 500l. Respondent must be about twenty-two, money no object.

BESSIE, eighteen, dark hair and eyes, clear complexion, 5 ft. 6 in. Respondent must be a young tradesman, dark, and good looking.

JULIA, twenty-three, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall and dark, about twenty-six; a respectable tradesman preferred.

KATE W., sixteen, fair hair, gray eyes and clear complexion, pretty, with 2,000l. a year. Respondent must be dark and good looking.

FLORENCE OSBORNE, nineteen, tall, an oval face, dark eyes and hair, a Roman nose, with a great talent for music, domesticated, good tempered, and 500l. a year. Respondent must be dark and have an income of 600l.

ROSE and LILY.—"Rose," eighteen, tall and slight, brown hair and eyes, cheerful disposition, and will have a little money when of age. "Lily," twenty, medium height, black hair and eyes, good looking. Respondents must be dark, good looking, and fond of home.

ADAM and MINNIE.—"Adam," eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, and daughter of a retired tradesman. "Minnie," nineteen, tall, fair, light hair, blue eyes, pretty, thoroughly accomplished. Respondents must be tall, good tempered, dark, and handsome.

ELIZABETH and ISABELLA. T.—"Elizabeth," seventeen, medium height, hazel eyes, brown hair, and a cheerful disposition. Respondent must be tall and fond of home. "Isabella," sixteen, brown hair, medium height, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be tall, dark hair and eyes, have a moustache and be fond of home.

GERALDINE, ADELAIDE, and ALARA.—"Geraldine," twenty-four, dark complexion, brown eyes, medium height, good looking, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be about the same age, and fond of home. "Adelaide," nineteen, fair, blue eyes, well educated. Respondent must be one or two years older. "Alara," twenty-two, very dark, good looking, stout, and has a small income. Respondent must be about the same age, with good wages.

M. W. GERTRUDE, BEATRICE, and LIZIE.—"M. W.," twenty-five, dark, tall, and genteel. Respondent must be about two years older, rather tall, and have a moderate income. "Gertrude," twenty-four, fair, blue eyes, and accomplished. "Beatrice," twenty-one, very dark, and pretty, medium height, and thoroughly domesticated. "Lizzie," twenty, a brunette. Respondents must be kind, and of temperate habits.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MAGGIE is responded to by—"A. C."

JANET H. by—"W. R. W.," eighteen, dark, and handsome, with a farm, and money when of age.

ROSE by—"Horace," 6 ft. fair, auburn hair, whiskers and beard, 250l. to 300l. per annum, of a quiet, unobtrusive nature.

AN OFFICER'S DAUGHTER by—"B. Z.," a merchant, just returned from Australia.

LILY by—"W. P. S.," twenty-seven, fair complexion, good looking, a sergeant in a mounted corps.

T. H. W., by—"G. H.," nineteen, medium height, auburn hair, dark blue eyes, fair complexion, domesticated, and fond of home.

WILLIE SEYMOUR by—"Bessie B.," fair, dark gray eyes, and medium height; and—"Emmeline," nineteen, tall, and graceful, fair, gray eyes, brown hair, and fond of home.

CHARLES COOKER by—"Polly G.," fair, tall, and hazel eyes; and—"Sus.," seventeen, gray eyes, golden hair, pretty, fond of singing and dancing, no expectations. (Be rather more careful and your handwriting will be good.)

P. CLARK by—"Rose Maud," twenty-three, tall, dark hair and eyes, fair, and a little colour, domesticated, a Protestant, and fond of home; and—"Ann Harriet Edwards," sixteen, auburn hair, dark brown eyes, fair, respectfully connected, and fond of home.

HARRY by—"E. M.," twenty-three, dark, medium height, domesticated, amiable, affectionate; and—"Alice M. A. F.," twenty-three, pretty, respectable, thoroughly domesticated, and of a lively disposition.

GERALD J. by—"Maria E. G.," seventeen, pretty, fair, blue eyes, very respectfully connected.

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